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## *The Shared Vision as a Change Engine*

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### PROJECT MANAGEMENT: ORIGINS AND DOMAIN

Project management is one of the central lines of managerial studies. In the beginning of the 1960s this discipline already appeared unquestionably important in the sphere of corporate culture and was apparently heralding, as was later confirmed, considerable changes in the promotion and management of innovation processes.

However, originally the approach was distinctly technical, the organizational aspects being somehow overlooked and the methodology restricted to specific domains, such as projects for large works (in civil engineering) and projects for the development of new products in industrial and

information engineering. Moreover, project management was thought to concern only project or program units.

Subsequent developments changed the contents and the scope of this discipline, and came to encompass any project typology, including projects for strategic, organizational, and managerial change, from the point of view of an integrated company's management where all domains contribute to the success of projects and projects are implemented in all domains.

Frederick Taylor and Henry Gantt (who can, respectively, be considered father to scientific management and to project management) were both engineers, born at the beginning of the twentieth century. This was not fortuitous. Management was born inside Ford-style factories and tested on production organization, today known as operations management. From operations, project management kept developing, throughout any corporate domain. Because project management was born in factories this explains why project managers are required to have both technical–scientific skills (i.e., in basic technological science and plant engineering) and economical–managerial skills. Systemic, quantitative, and design and construction of models approaches on one hand, and planning and implementing skills on the other hand, are considered as important as the above-mentioned capabilities.

Planning and implementing skills, as well, require a target-orientation, a problem-solving approach, a methodological rigor, and a disposition to measuring. Characteristics pertaining to co-ordinators of interfunctional groups are also required: leadership, attitude to change, learning capacity, communication, integration, and process management. A project manager's critical success factor lies in his ability to interpret environmental change with sensitivity and creativity and to manage the problems concerning the subsequent changes in the organization.

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## **PROJECT MANAGEMENT AS MANAGEMENT OF BECOMING**

Production management evolved deeply in the last century: from the Taylor–Ford model of mass production to the Honda–Toyota model of Lean production. The management of innovation projects still does not seem to express its full potential because it is too often cut off in a functional organization context, with all ensuing communication, co-ordination, and

integration problems. In the last few years the dismantling of this context started through “process orientation,” now the fertile breeding ground for a change for the better in the application of project management to the organization as a whole.

Operations management and project management represent, for the company and the corporate systems, the management disciplines of, respectively, the steady condition and the transitory situation. Competition runs faster and faster and is pushed by accelerators such as technological innovation and market globalization. The latter forces companies and their supply and distribution networks to unceasingly redefine products, services, markets, production and distribution connections, production technologies, information and communication systems, organization structures, and managing processes more and more frequently, to the point that temporariness acquires a steadiness character: steadiness doesn't exist any longer or becomes less and less important; on the contrary, temporariness becomes the actual functioning modality of companies, engaged in never-ending changes.

We are, after all, rediscovering in the managing sphere what the pre-Socratic Heraclitus sensed a few thousand years ago in relation to the universal flow of things: *panta rei*, everything flows. The dispute between being and becoming takes root in an old philosophical case going back to the very origin of western philosophy. Parmenides maintained that multiplicity and change in the physical world are illusory and asserted that existence is real: unchanging, eternal, and indestructible. According to Parmenides, the philosopher of unity and identity of existence, change is an illusion, a blunder, and everything is fundamentally immutable.

Heraclitus, one of Parmenides' contemporaries, opposes the latter's thought. He, on the contrary, can be considered the philosopher of change and becoming: “No man can bathe twice in the same river, because neither man nor the water in the river are the same.” The whole world is considered as an enormous eternal flow, where nothing is ever the same, because everything changes and undergoes constant evolution. For these reasons, Heraclitus identifies the shape of existence in becoming, as everything is subject to time and evolves constantly. Further on, he maintains that change and movement only are existing and the identity of immutable things is illusory: according to Heraclitus, everything flows.

Parmenides' logic of being won over Heraclitus' logic of becoming thanks to Aristotle's metaphysics; therefore philosophy first, then science, was founded on what became par excellence classic logic. According

to Aristotle, becoming, an everyday experience, is but the passage from one kind of being to another one. In short, being is the only reality and becoming is just one of the ways of being. Aristotle formulates the ideas of potentiality and actuality. Potentiality generally represents the possibility something may change or assume some particular “shape.” The act is the realization of that change, and represents the actual product obtained as a result of the change. For instance, a chick potentially is a cock, the same as the cock is the chick put into action. According to Aristotle, the act is superior to potentiality, inasmuch as it’s the cause, the meaning, and the aim of everything that potentially exists.

The logic of becoming ceased to exist for over 2,000 years. The comeback to Heraclitus was proposed by Hegel, with his dialectics with which he explained the dynamism of reality through thesis (being), antithesis (nothingness), and synthesis (becoming). According to Hegel, the being is the beginning; it doesn’t need any other concept at the source. It’s the most undetermined concept of all, because any determination implies a relation/opposition with other concepts. Nothingness, although representing the antithesis of being, the utmost of indetermination, finally identifies with it, and synthesis, or becoming, is therefore generated. The truth of being, as that of nothingness, is their unity, and this unity is the becoming. The unity of being and nothingness is not a complete leveling, it’s diversity, and this identity makes us realize the contradiction in reality.

In explicit controversy with Parmenides, but with Aristotle too, Hegel maintains that becoming has supremacy over being. Whereas according to Parmenides and Aristotle the being cannot not-be, it’s noncontradictory; it’s one. That is to say, everything is identical to itself. According to Hegel the being is and is not, it is contradictory, and divided into dialectic polarities that contradict and synthesize each other. Everything recalls its opposite, and is at the same time itself, its opposite, and the synthesis of both. What ensues, for instance, is that “falsehood is but a moment of truth.”

If we may ascribe operations management to the philosophy of being, we may as well place project management in the wake of the philosophy of becoming. In the final analysis the basic thesis is that, as everything becomes, then management science and art do not concern “steadiness” but “transitoriness.” What follows is that, in order to manage continuous organizational change, the typical project management approach is fundamental, and that is exactly the approach pertaining to “becoming.” In overall synthesis, “management” is always “management of becoming”

and the future of management is found in project management as the set of principles, methods, techniques, and tools apt at managing change.

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## **THE DRIVING FORCE IN CHANGE: DREAM, VISION, AND MYTH**

If management is always “management of becoming,” a key question has to be asked. What are the driving forces in change? In order for this question to be answered, we have to make a distinction among persons, organizations, and society, that is dreams, vision, and myth. But let’s proceed with order. We follow a pathway that brings us to state that the true driving forces in change are dreams as the individual’s imagination, vision as the organization’s imagination, and myth as society’s imagination. For a project manager, in charge of a company, being aware of dreams, vision, and myth is as fundamental as for a racing driver being acquainted with the car’s engine.

### **Dream as a Creative Source**

“Probably no human experience is as distinctly creative as dream. No phenomenon is more endowed with unpredictable transformation potential. No moment is more inventively poetic, that is—in the etymologic sense—full of *poiesis*. The unforeseen, the illogic, the unthinkable, the unnatural become, in dream, most naturally obvious” [1,2].

Dreams reveal the environment we live in and connect us to it. Dreams take us to the region of knowing/not knowing, the seat of truly creative thought, and where a pragmatic approach to reality can still be undertaken. Dreams “think” reality. Dreams are the mental space where known and unknown co-exist, and where the unknown has neither shape nor time, or rather stands beyond and ahead of the concepts of time and space on which a great part of our mental functioning is based and to which it is confined [3].

“I have a dream: that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.” With this statement Martin Luther King, Jr. opened the season of civil rights claims by African Americans at the end of the 1960s in the United States. Claiming the right to equality regardless of the color of the skin was in those years a kind of mirage, an illusion, an utopia:

a dream, precisely. Unexpectedly, Martin Luther King's dream came true, and without his having started from a position of power. "I have a dream" became a slogan, the symbol of how seemingly impossible goals can be reached. If Martin Luther King chose to incite his followers with the sentence, "I have a dream" and not, "I have a five-year plan," there must have been a reason: men need to share a dream to let their light shine.

In history more than once simple men were seen to make great projects come true with the mere strength of their aspiration. Gary Hamel, management professor, in his book, *Leaders of the Revolution* [4] gives several examples: "How many times has revolution been made by kings? Nelson Mandela, Vaclav Havel, Thomas Paine, Mahatma Gandhi: Had these men any political power? They didn't but they subverted the course of history thanks to passion."

Anatole France, Nobel prize winner for literature in 1921, singles out the stubborn prosecution of a dream as the way of obtaining great results: "To make great strides, we must not only act, but also dream, not only plan, but also believe" [51]. Peter Senge [5], an expert in social systems, believes the role of single people and minorities in determining change to be historically fundamental: "I don't know of many examples in history where significant changes were led by majorities and I see no reason to believe that this will be any different."

The American writer Carl Sandburg believed that nothing can happen without having been dreamed first: "Nothing can happen unless first a dream." The great cartoonist Walt Disney recognizes in dreams the capacity of liberating energy: "If you can dream it, you can do it." The German writer Hermann Hesse describes dreams as the source of the strength needed to overcome obstacles: "It's always difficult to be born [...] the bird struggles out of the egg [...] one's dream has to be found, to make the road easier." Jim Morrison, one of the greatest rock singers of the sixties, the leader of The Doors, maintained that dreams can liberate unexpressed potentialities: "Each of us has a pair of wings, but only those who dream learn to fly" [55].

When the focus of our attention moves from people to companies, the dream retains its evocative force, its propellant drive, and its ability of liberating energy. Kawamoto [6], the president of Honda Motor Corporation, in explaining the founder Soichiro Honda's "five commandments," underlines the central role of dreams in a large company's management.

We want to go on being a dream animated company, a company always young in spirit. Dreams—or ambitions—are the driving and positive force motivating us. In our existence we are urged to meet new challenges and never fear failure. In order for our dreams to become reality, we persist until all obstacles are overcome. In this research, we challenge ourselves as well as those around us. When our dreams finally become reality, we'll feel truly satisfied. [6]

The first who believed in the power of dreams was first of all the founder of Honda; Soichiro Honda didn't call his first motorcycle, his first creation, "Dream," by accident.

Many companies, in various fields, availed themselves of the image of dream in mass communication. We just quote a few. "Don't stop dreaming" (Sky). "The power of dreams" (Honda). "Dream Ideas" (Panasonic). "Long live dreams" (American Express, 2002). "If we didn't have dreams, we couldn't make them true" (BMW, 2007). "Nothing stops who decided to dream out of any constraint" (Audi, 2004). "We hold your dreams together" (Trenitalia, 2003). "I feel the hero of a dream" (Vodafone, 2002). "New Class S: The dream goes on" (Mercedes Benz, 2005). "To all who have a dream, we dedicated a custom made bank to make it true" (Unicredit, 2003). "The largest assortment of dreams" (Flou, 2006).

Mercedes Benz takes the idea of dream still further: "Dreaming. I see space and infinite dimensions through which my mind navigates. When I am awake I dream, I think ahead, I look ahead. I close my eyes and I see images and ideas flowing, coming to meet me. Darkness helps, it doesn't frighten me" [7]. In conventions and meetings the topic of dreams is often used in names: "Sign, dream, design" was the slogan the BMW group used in December 2001 for the presentation of the new Mini Cooper. A film director such as Steven Spielberg, an expert on imagination, in naming his motion picture company made dream his trademark: "Dreamworks."

The power of dreams comes from their peculiar ability to liberate energy. D'Egidio [8] singles out two sources of "energy" a company may avail itself of: the past, on one hand, the historical energy, constituted of accumulated experience, acquired knowledge, company climate, values, and rules; and the future, for the energy to come. When a company is born, the latter is necessarily the ruling one: "It is made of all the dreams, the imagination, the goals, the thoughts and the expectations. It's the energy created by a deep desire of realizing something new, different, exceptional, unique and irresistible."

Why do major international companies use dream as a motivational factor and evoke it in their advertising campaigns? The answer is that dream plays a fundamental role in unleashing energies that wouldn't otherwise develop and triggers positive emotions in imagining wished-for scenarios coming true. Dream can become the guideline, the line of march in someone's life, ambitions, and efforts, even when the dream appears unrealizable. On the contrary, pursuing one's dreams seems one of the greatest gifts nature put aside for mankind. "The greatest single human gift is the ability to chase down our dreams." This is what professor Allen Hobby states in the Steven Spielberg movie, *Artificial Intelligence* (2001).

The well known sociologist Alberoni links dream ideals, personality, and feelings.

Extremely different skills are required to become a great entrepreneur, a great scientist, a great artist and a great political. And they appear extremely early. At the age of seven, it's already plain who can draw beautifully, who can do business, who can compose music, who is endowed with mathematical genius. But all these people, so different one from the other, have something in common. Each of them, in his domain, will achieve great things only by expressing himself fully, with his dreams, his personality, his life. His special abilities—musical, entrepreneurial, political creativity—are just the instruments for expression. An entrepreneur can create a vital and successful enterprise only by embodying his deepest feelings, his ideals, his spirit's richness in it. This enterprise is his novel, his symphony, his Sistine Chapel. It's the materialization of his mind. [9, p. 77]

Sergio Bambarén, an Australian writer, states: "We are as great as the dreams we strive to make true, and no matter what we meet along this journey called life. If we pursue our dreams with all our heart we'll understand the true meaning of our existence and we'll be almost sure to reach the goal we set [10]. "And after making one dream true, we pursue another one, as Hermann Hesse reminds us: "There's no everlasting dream. Each dream gives way to a new one and we mustn't try and keep any back." "When I dream, I live" (Native American chief): this is what appears in block capitals on the wall of the main stairs to Satel Group's offices in Pordenone. The proprietor, Francesco Regeni, when asked the reason for that choice, answered that this sentence echoes the sensibility of the main part of the company workers.

Carlo Talamo, who died in 2002, was an importer of Harley-Davidson and Triumph motorcycles. He maintained that an entrepreneur, like a



child, should not think, but do things, pursuing his dreams: “Building an enterprise means strongly believing in it. Difficult moments are an integral part of a company’s development. [...] As Morandi (an Italian singer) says “One of a thousand makes it, but how hard the climb is. But I am an eight year old child, and just as I did then, I dream of being a fireman, of driving a race car, of having a big chrome motorcycle making a lot of noise. Children don’t think; they just do things. So, if we have a dream, we have to pursue it” [11, pp. 148–150].

Mark Fisher, who sold millions of copies with his bestseller *The Millionaire* [12], described how wishes and dreams shape people’s existence, because man unavoidably becomes what he thinks every day. “At the base of each fortune is the faith of a man who believed in himself, who believed in an idea, in a dream, as crazy as it may have appeared to others.” Victor Hugo would say: “No army in the world can stop an idea when its moment comes” [52]. Oscar Wilde comes to the point of saying that “An idea that is not dangerous, is unworthy of being called an idea at all” [53]. Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr. knew well the capacity an idea has of provoking irreversible changes, “Man’s mind, once stretched by a new idea, never regains its original dimensions” [54].

Why are dreams important? Because, “But only in their dreams can man be truly free. ‘It was always thus and always thus will be,’” says the famous actor Robin Williams as John Keating in the movie *Dead Poets Society*.

## **Myth as Means of Transformation**

Group orientation and motivation are fundamental in change management. But in order to mobilize groups, powerful aggregation myths are required, endowing the group’s actions and operations with meaning. Therefore, the essential passage for the management of transformation processes is the formulation and sharing of myths.

The word “myth” is derived from the Greek word *muthos* essentially meaning a string of words bearing sense. It’s a speech, a public speech. It means the contents of these words, too, a thought. At the time of Homer’s epos, it acquired the quality of fiction, and became a made-up story, an imaginary story, a tale, or an allegory. Myth opposes reality, intended as an obstacle to imagination, but is a true story at the same time. At the end of the nineteenth century, myth was an idealized representation of a past condition of humanity and of its origin. In the twentieth century

a decisive role in representing a collectivity [13] or an individual [14] was ascribed to myth.

The process of expression of an individual as a unique being is a personal replica of humanity's great collective journey emerging from the primeval undifferentiation. This journey is represented, in primitive collective imaginary systems, by humanity's foundation myths [15]. In these great mythological–religious sagas humanity's process of development is described, with strikingly analogous topic and structure characteristics. In all foundation myths (the Judeo–Christian one, the Babylonian, Roman, Greek, and Sumerian ones, and so on) the same shared foundation phases are described: at the beginning the world appears in an undifferentiated and chaotic state. In a second phase, a function of separation and order in the primeval chaos appears, personified by an rebelling hero: Prometheus, Marduk, Gilgamesh, and so on. Then comes a regressive phase, in which the hero is temporarily defeated (Prometheus chained, Jesus going down to the underworld, and so on) and finally the process sets on its journey again and the hero prevails for good.

These phases correspond exactly, as Neumann [16] proved, to an individual's development, in his exiting the undifferentiated state of fusion with the mother, to his heroic facing the problems issued from separation and his giving in to the ensuing depressive and regressive spurs, finally arriving at his emerging as a differentiated and self-sufficient individual. The foundation myths are an echo, a sounding board, on the collective imaginary level, of this process, typical of humankind, archetypically pre-determined and forever unfolding in the same topic mode.

Myths carry out the typical function of ancient religions: binding together (*religare*, in Latin,) the elements of reality in a comprehensible whole, explaining and arranging nature's terrifying and uncontrollable reality. Myths are appropriate systems for the explanation, communication, and signifying of shared experience, allowing man to face the first hard phases of contact with the chaotic elements in the environment [15].

Myths allow the discovery of a new way of understanding the whole and the relationship of the self inside that whole. Myths are the main vector of our migration and transition experience as well. Social transition needs myth as a means of transformation [17]. Myths determine the interpretation of the evolution in environment and bring it to transformation.

In today's life the existence of an organization without a shared myth is totally unimaginable. These myths originate in an instinctual fear of change. Their expression assumes several shapes, but all of them essentially

illustrate the regulation of the relationship between the organization and the institution, explain the problems involved with change and “migration,” and indicate the intensity and importance of the fears implied in evolutionary processes [17].

Many examples of social transition exist, especially in the kingdom of myths and stories. The expulsion from the Garden of Eden, the construction of the Tower of Babel, the journey to the Promised Land, to mention just a few, can be quoted. Obviously transition is always linked to the fear of the ensuing collapse of the actual order, the new shape of which is not defined yet. The expulsion from Eden speaks about life, about transition and the need for transformation [17].

Another meaningful concept is the “myth container” vehicle, allowing transition and possibly helping transformation as well [18]. Many historical examples can be quoted. The funerary ceremonial boats used to carry Pharaohs are an example. This kind of boat was used to carry to the necropolis a sort of catafalque, a platform adorned with palls supporting the coffin with the dead man’s mummy. Terrestrial and fluvial boats were used. The fluvial boats were needed to cross the river separating the city of the living from the city of the dead. The journey would start from a purification basin where special funerary rites were performed on the mummy. In most cases, the transportation was done on the sand and in this case the boat was purely symbolic and pulled by a draught of oxen, or supplied with wheels [17].

In the Bible, the first and most ancient prototype of container or holy construction was the Ark, thanks to which Noah, his family, and the animals survived the cataclysm of the Flood. A further example of the “myth container” vector, allowing transformation, is the Ark of the Covenant, the symbol and the cornerstone prophecy in Jewish tradition. The Ark of the Covenant was the container where Israel had placed the Torah Tablets, after receiving them on Mount Sinai. The Ten Commandments were engraved on them. The Ark was carried for all of the 40-year journey through the desert, and came along with Israel in the long years of conquest of the Promised Land, until it was finally placed in the temple King Solomon built. The Ark was made by a case two and a half cubits long (one cubit = half meter) and one and a half cubits wide and high. When Israel set up the camp, a special tent made for the purpose was set up in the center and the Ark placed inside. It consisted of two main pieces: a parallelepiped underneath and a cover to close it, symbolizing the earth and the sky. Even if in nature earth is spherical (as all celestial bodies) and its movement

elliptical (the circle being a particular case of an ellipse), according to cabalistic tradition the shape spiritually more suitable to represent the earth is the cube. In other words, today's universe is said to be ruled by spherical shapes, and the future one (the "new skies and the new earth") will mostly be inhabited by cubic shapes. This transformation holds the secret of the passage from a circular time (repeating itself, as in the Myth of the Eternal Return) to a rectilinear time, leading man toward a goal in all respects dissimilar from the point of departure. The conception of history as a series of events ferrying men from a less perfect state to a better and better one is one of the innovations of Jewish thought, and it has become an integral part of Western thought. Today it permeates both the laic and worldly concept of "progress," and the subtler and more refined idea of "evolution." From a symbolic point of view its representation is the transformation of the spherical shape of physical space into a cube.

Myth sets the borders of the inclusion–exclusion from the group and supports the feeling of belonging to a whole. Myths therefore acquire the value of refoundation of the origin, of the world's order and purpose [19]. If dream is the imagination of intimacy, myth is the imagination of what is social, public, and collective. Dealing with collective imagery, René Kaës [19] underlines two functions:

- An exploratory imagination, related to the primary processes of the portrayal of the unknown: this is a group's dream.
- An explicatory imagination, aimed at creating a shared and agreed-on representation of the group members' ego: this is the myth.

The group's dream and myth are therefore two forms of collective imagination: the first is the imagination exploring the unknown, and the second is the imagination explaining it, the explicatory imagination.

Finally, myth is the explicatory imagination of the members of a group, an imagery allowing someone to make an initiation journey, on a path out of time, in order to experience the hero's journey and the birth of self, a journey tuned to the rhythm of the great mythological sagas brought back to life in the dreams of individuals themselves [15].

### **Vision as the Imagination of the Organization**

So, myth is the collective imagination explaining, communicating, and giving meaning to individuals' shared experience. The more society lives

people with a vision, a line of march. Embracing the thought of the psychologist Quaglino, these two authors state that men with a dream and the ability of transforming it into a need to participate in the construction of something special should lead companies.

Sharing a meaning is considered fundamental by Warren Bennis [23] too:

People would like to spend their life in a cause they believe in, instead of dragging themselves along a second-rate existence devoid of meaningful ideals. [...] It's necessary to create a shared aim, because people really need an aim; a meaningful aim. This is the reason why we live; and I think that a company's strength will stand in that very shared aim. With such an aim, a stimulating and shared aim, everything can be reached.

The sociologist Alberoni writes, as well: "We expect a true commander to endow our actions with meaning" [24, p. 21]. A shared aspiration ensures the energy needed for success; this is what Prahalad [25] maintains:

Companies need a widely shared aspiration [...] This is the fuel that drives the engine [...] Strategic architecture provides a company with the direction, but it needs to have the emotional and intellectual energy to make the journey. It needs shared aspiration, which allows the company to stretch itself beyond its current resources; one that provides a sense of direction, a sense of common purpose, a single-minded and inspiring challenge which commands the respect and the allegiance of every person in the organization.

To sum up: in change processes, the *leitmotif* of project management, a strong vision is needed, a vision capable of directing the group, activating its motivation, and liberating its creative energies.

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## SHARED VISION AS THE FUNDAMENTAL LEVER FOR CHANGE

We have seen how the dream is the driving force of an individual's creative push. Sharing dreams, intended as an individual's imagination, in a group is the fundamental condition in order to make it come true. The dream must become a shared dream, the organization's vision. The power of the vision, intended as the imagination of the group, inside the group, has the same power as myth on a social level. As myth is the means of

transformation from a social situation to a different one, shared vision directs the group during change from one condition to another.

On the simplest level, a shared vision is the answer to the question: “What do we intend to create?” Exactly as personal visions are representations or images people carry in their heads and hearts, so shared visions are representations adopted by the people in an organization. If well developed, shared vision is a very powerful force.

According to Peter Senge [26], “A shared vision is not an idea [...]. It is rather some strength in people’s heart, a strength with an impressive might. It may be inspired by an idea, but once it goes beyond it—if it is engaging enough as to acquire more than one person’s support—it is not an abstraction anymore. It is palpable. People start seeing it as if it existed. In human affairs few things, if any, are as powerful as a shared vision.” The author explains how energy must be sought inside, maintaining that the persuasion of being able to realize something great is the source of extraordinary strength:

We must stop trying to understand what we have to do by looking at what we did in the past [...] we must start really looking into our heart, to find what appears truly possible to us. That literally means enacting a process of change inspired by a vision. The source of energy is in our inner persuasion that some thing can be done. And we might be talking about a product never produced before on a large scale: all historical data say no, but our heart says yes.

A group without a vision is like a ship without a destination. A worker without a vision is not aware of the final goal of his work. Three stonecutters, working on the preparation of stones to build a castle, were asked, “For what reason do you work in this place?” The first answered, “I’m working because this is how I’ll be able to eat.” The second replied, “I’m working to get the stones ready for the construction of this wall.” The third stonecutter, jumping to his feet and swelling out his chest, gave this answer, “I am working in order to finish that huge castle that will be built over there” [27, p. 37]. Sharing the vision is the condition needed to participate in the joy of producing, of creating.

Eric Motley (who was in charge of the selection of former U.S. President George W. Bush’s advisory board members at the White House, a key role in the president’s entourage) explained, in a 2002 interview, that the key words of success are vision, group, and shared values. “The first step is

to shift from the idea of 'I' to the concept of 'Us' and to understand that one is too small a number to do great things. [...] The desirable qualities to be able to give a constructive contribution to a team are: strong character, loyalty to the team, broadmindedness, wide-ranging interest, honesty and self-confidence." An idea the human resources expert insists on is the need on the group's part of sharing common values and having a vision. "It's important to understand where the team is going, make sure to have the right people for the journey and subordinate one's goals to the team's."

Valdani [28] says: "The formulation of a vision doesn't warrant a profitable adventure in the future world, but without vision no journey can start." And in order to warrant a "profitable adventure," as Valdani calls it, the organization must share the vision.

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## THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE SHARED VISION

Man feels the need for sharing: only by sharing a group's values and culture may a person be accepted. Sharing therefore becomes first of all a mechanism of acceptance in social systems, as writes Gharajedaghi [29, pp. 84–85]:

The shared image is the main tie between the members of a human community, and it encourages the rising of the required conditions for any significant communication. The degree with which the single person's image coincides with the community's shared image, determines the former's degree of participation to the community itself. It's the shared image we refer to when we speak of a people's culture. This embodies a people's experience, beliefs, attitudes, ideals, it's the final product of his history and the manifestation of his identity; man makes his culture and his culture makes the man.

If we cut any picture, each part shows only a fraction of the whole image. If we divide a hologram, each part represents the whole image, intact. Likewise, if the hologram goes on being divided, no matter how small the parts, each piece will still represent the whole image. Similarly, when a group of people shares the vision of an organization, each of them gives a representation of the organization. Each shares the whole of the

responsibility, not only in what concerns his own part. The “pieces” composing the hologram are not identical, but each of them represents the whole image.

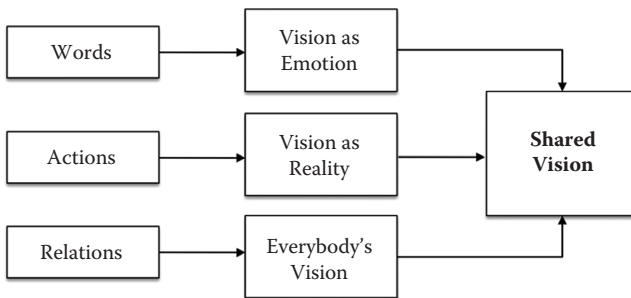
Senge [26] states: “When the pieces of a hologram are summed up together, the image of the whole doesn’t radically change. After all, it was in each piece. But nevertheless the image becomes more intense, more vital [...]. As the shared vision develops, it becomes at the same time ‘my vision’ and ‘our vision’.”

Hans Juergen Warnecke and Manfred Hueser defined the ideal organization as a fractal. Starting from this definition, Savage [30] comes to the conclusion that in such a structure every component is as independent as needed to take one’s decisions autonomously, but at the same time the decision meets criteria the whole organization shares. Or rather, referring to the hologrammatic model, the part is in the whole, the whole is in the part.

Adriplast, a chemical industry part of the multinational Solvay Group, indicates sharing as a must for vision: “The vision in Adriplast is clear, obvious and measurable; challenging; strong and accessible to everyone; shared; spread to all levels” [31]. Bessone concludes saying: “Our Vision is an image of the future we want to create, described at the present tense, as if already happening.”

In order for a vision truly to become a powerful strength, it needs (see Figure 4.1):

- Words, for it to be exciting
- Actions, for it to be real, tangible
- Relations, for it to be shared with everyone



**FIGURE 4.1**  
Construction of the shared vision [32, p. 386].



## Vision as Emotion

Vision must first of all be an emotion. Without this component motivation is reduced to a short-lived activity. A leadership lacking the required contact with individuals ends up withdrawing from real-life situations, unable to have a grip on its people's lives and aspirations. "An act of persuasion is needed; a firm and enthusiast engagement must be created for the organization and for the people working in it. Focusing his collaborators' attention on the vision, the leader is acting on the company's emotional and spiritual resources, on their values, on their engagement and their aspirations" [33].

According to Corrigan [34] in Shakespeare's works leaders succeed in excitingly conveying their vision as emotion. Here is a quote, as an example of vision as emotion in Shakespeare's theatre. The example concerns Henry V, addressing his men before the battle of Agincourt, where the English army must face an army, the French one, ten times as large [50].

We few, we happy few, we band of brothers  
For he today that sheds his blood with me  
Shall be my brother; be he ne'er so vile,  
This day shall gentle his condition;  
And gentlemen in England now abed  
Shall think themselves accursed they were not here  
And hold their manhoods cheap whiles any speak  
That fought with us upon Saint Crispin's day.

Henry V ends his transfer of emotional energy to his men with the following statement, a very effective one, on our opinion: "All things are ready, if our minds be so." According to Corrigan [34], "Shakespeare's Henry is endowed with a very powerful vision, capable of producing deep transformation: after hearing the king's speech, the men he is addressing become different soldiers, become part of a larger entity. Henry shows managers that if they want their people to be a cut above, new stimuli and a new enthusiasm are required."

The first characteristic management must try to achieve is therefore the ability of formulating a clear vision. In the 1960s, John F. Kennedy brought the whole nation together with the renovation of the American myth of the new frontier, and moved it from the West to Space: the challenge consisted of sending man to the Moon within the end of the decade. People had to be emotionally involved.

One must somehow be an artist (Hammer and Champy [35, p. 173]): "Creating the vision of the organization [...] requires a kind of artistic

ability, because a vision is an image without details.” According to Schein [36], the evocation of stories, myths, and legends is as important as formal vision. And Kets de Vries and Miller [37] note, “This homogeneity of points of view may be strengthened by myths, legends and stories about the organization, allowing members to identify shared symbols, to reach a sense of community and to give birth to shared fantasies. These fantasies could be about the origin of the company, the story of its evolution, the difficulties overcome, the rites of transition, and involve all inside and outside relations in the organization. According to Mintzoff and Kilmann ‘corporate mythology is the spirit of the organization and is spread on all management levels.’”

### **Vision as Reality**

Vision must not only consist of emotion; it has to include reality as well. Obviously, if vision, as energizing and emotionally involving as it may be, is committed to paper only, it cannot be shared. Actions are needed on management’s part to show how vision is something real, to be used daily. Bennis [23] writes:

To convey a vision something more than words is needed. It’s not a question of bright speeches, of commanding notes or glittering plates hanging on the wall. It’s a question of living through the vision, day by day, of interiorizing it and granting autonomy to other members of the organization, in order to allow him to implement and make the vision true in every single action [...] If there ever was some truth, it is that actions are more important than words.

According to Lowney [38, p. 89]: “Leaders can influence other people with their example, their ideals and their teachings.” Peters [39, p. 401] reinforces the same concept: “Posters expressing the vision and company values charts can really be useful, but they can bring about the opposite effect. In fact, the risk is to hamper and mimic the motivational process if the vision and the values are just proclaimed and are not lived though in a convincing manner.” In short, leaders should set the example and show the steps to be taken for an individual to contribute operatively to that vision. This is the only way a vision may be perceived as real and actually become so.

### **Everyone’s Vision**

Finally vision must be born, develop, grow, and change through the relations inside the company, and become therefore everyone’s vision.

Bernardi and Muffato [40, p. 198] state: “The vision statement cannot be the result of a top-down process or be an ‘official’ vision reflecting only few people’s opinion. Furthermore, the attention it’s given cannot last just a few moment[s], when the vision is formulated, and then be forgotten. On the contrary, the vision statement must be confirmed by facts all the time.”

With special attention to the complex adaptive systems, as a company, Olson and Eoyang [41, p. 73] write that the vision emerges out of the interaction between the agents of the system:

Vision allows the members of a complex adaptive system to know who they are, what they can do well, and what is the direction they want to move to. For the development of a vision in an adaptive complex system, it’s essential to understand the actual dynamics and to allow system members the construction of future possibilities. The vision emerges from the place where order and disorder meet, in the rich interaction of experiences, thoughts and connections of the system’s agents.

A vision for everyone must take into account the different demands that are present in the company (Ciappei and Poggi [42, p. 163]): “From this viewpoint the organizational culture must be conceived as the result of an aggregation process of the different cultural demands present in the company, since this is the only way to involve all who can generate the shared vision.” In this respect, differences, countercultures, and the presence of protesters is very important in order to avoid the vision being flattened under the prevailing position.

On final analysis, a manager’s duty is a complex one, full of contradictions, always on the edge between the subordinates’ emotional involvement and contact with reality, not to be lost anyway. Peters [39] writes: “The most effective political or corporate leaders urge others to act—and develop—on support of a cause considered worthy by both the leaders and the subordinates. A leader’s duty is to enrich empowering vision and at the same time to keep in touch with his staff in order to make sure to be on the same wavelength required in the real world where the vision is implemented.”

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## **NEW MANAGERIAL MODELS IN ORDER TO FACE COMPLEXITY**

Shared vision is therefore the engine for change on the organizational level. It implies first of all the activation of self-organizational models.

**TABLE 4.2**Comparison between Classic Model and Complex Model<sup>a</sup>

Characteristics	Managerial Model	
	Classic Model	Complex Model
Organization	Traditional (hierarchical)	Self-organization (nonhierarchical)
Environment	Mostly steady	Turbulent
Future	Partially predictable	Unpredictable
Success	Balance and stability	Unbalance and change
Decision-making processes	Determined	Undetermined
Tools	Logical and analytic	Intuitive and analogy-based
Learning	Historical data extrapolation	By attempts
Management	Rules	Shared vision
Impact of inside differences	Negative	Positive
Managers' prevailing role	Planning and control	Creation of learning and innovating context
Managers' prevailing trend	Executive	Exploratory
New strategies formulation	Top down, backing agreement, order, harmony	Bottom up, backing conflicts, disorder, discordance
Goal	Stability (complexity reduction)	Flexibility (complexity absorption)

<sup>a</sup> From De Toni, A.F., Comello, L., and Ioan, L. (2011). *Auto-organizzazioni. Il mistero dell'emergenza dal basso nei sistemi fisici, biologici e sociali*. Venice: Marsilio. [43]

Self-organizational models are nonhierarchic organizational models. Among those proposed in specific literature we may quote: the circular model, hologrammatic model, cellular model, and holonic model [43]. In this very book these models are described in Chapter 5, Luca Comello's contribution. Traditional hierarchic organizational models are overcome within the framework of the transition from a traditional managerial model to a so-called complex managerial model (see Table 4.2).

Roberto Costantini, in the Italian epilogue to Pascale's book [44, p. 388], highlights the main differences between the classic model, suitable for simple situations, and the complex model, applicable in complex situations:

The old paradigm inclines to the construction of stability, predictability, and little risk (fail-safe world), while the new paradigm is based on the assumption that the future is unpredictable and turbulent and that it is therefore important for instability to be managed an all options to be

kept open (safe to fail world). Essentially, the old paradigm is handier to manage, more reassuring, on the short term, for investors, but certainly less adequate to the reality of the world around us and to long term development.

Adopting the complex model implies the idea of abandoning classic reductionist ideas. Avoiding reductionism means avoiding the attitude that, as a rule, often shaped companies' behavior: the attempt to aim at a simple representation of an otherwise complex reality in order to encourage decision making. The classic model considers an organization as a simple structure, set in a stable environment and in a predictable future. Success under this condition ensues from balance and stability. The complex model, on the other hand, is based on the idea that an organization is an adaptive complex system, set in a turbulent environment and in an unpredictable future. In such a situation, success comes for imbalance and change, as does survival for adaptive complex systems: according to Pascale and others [45]: "balance is dead."

Decision-making processes carried out according to the classic model are determined, meaning that they follow a precise procedure, whereas in the complex model they are undetermined, continuously discussed, and subject to modification [...] Gozzi states (Ciappei and Poggi [42, p. 163]): "The new decision-making process) is a research journey, tortuous, non-linear, full of unpredictable and unknown events, ambiguous and contradictory here and there [...] generation and manipulation of knowledge rather than well-established procedure, under the constant control of the decision-makers, and the guide of calculation and organization."

According to Pascale [45]: "Management per goals is not very useful. We don't want static targets, but a process aimed at steadily making things better." The classic model bases management on rational rules, considers the presence of internal dissimilarities to be negative and assigns to management a prevailing task of planning and control. In order to give the best guarantee for managing co-ordination, the complex model leverages the shared vision obtained through activation of social processes; it furthermore considers positively the presence of inside differences as a source of innovation, and assigns to management the task of creating favorable conditions for learning and constant innovation.

The new approach to management is much less comforting than the classic one, doesn't reduce anxiety, but is much more dynamic and useful

in turbulent times. Top managers in large organizations are faced with the following alternative.

- Allowing the emergence of new strategies. Conflicts, disorder, and disharmony will follow this process. A new strategy might emerge, or maybe not.
- Insisting on adhesion to the formulated plan. By the application of direct forms of control to situations with an unpredictable ending the risk of conflicts, disorder, and disharmony is considerably reduced. As a result the emergence of a new potential direction will be blocked. What appears as the safest alternative, the second one, actually is the most dangerous one, not taking into account the dynamics of the game.

As for the final goal of the two models, Kenwyn Smith of Wharton School maintains that whereas the classic model is stability-oriented, the complex model is flexibility-oriented (Pascale [45]). The difference between stability and flexibility emphasizes two radically opposite views of organization management. Orientation to stability highlights balance, therefore assigning all resources to the maintenance of a predictable situation (a world safe from mistakes) becomes especially important in such a scenario. According to the second orientation, energies must concentrate on flexibility, highlighting the importance of keeping one's options open (a world of "safe" mistakes). In such a scenario, the basic hypothesis is that the future is unpredictable, rather than predictable.

This idea resembles the concept of stability and resilience studied by the Ecologic School [46]. In today's ecologic theory, as proposed by Holling, May, Ewing, and others, resilience can oppose simple stability. Stability is the ability of an ecosystem to return to a stable situation after a temporary perturbation: the quicker it goes back and the smaller the fluctuation in comparison to the rule of its steady status, the more stable the system is. Nevertheless another property, called resilience, turns out to be more important whenever the point of view of the maintenance of ecosystems over the long term is adopted: resilience is the measure of the ability of the system to absorb change and perturbations, and to find stable solutions of state with respect to a series of fluctuations covering an ample range of directions as well.

Stability deals with reduction of complexity and flexibility with the absorption of complexity. The traditional model is not wrong, but insufficient, as Savage [30] states: “When the future is like the past, organizing through routine makes sense. But when round spheres, unexpected harmonies and kaleidoscope technological changes are everyday occurrences, the implementation of a strategy aimed at complexity and variety is required.”

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## THE PROJECT MANAGER’S NEW ROLE

In the complex management model, the project manager’s leadership may seem less important, but it is not so. In a logic of self-organization, according to Vicari [47, p. 147]: “The leader’s functions increase, instead of decreasing. In fact self-organization, as physics teach us, can also happen spontaneously, but always under certain conditions. The manager’s task is, therefore, the creation of such conditions [...]”

Anderson [48, pp. 216–232] maintains management should supply the outer energy required for the self-organization of complex adaptive systems:

Self-organization will not apply without a continuous energy flow inside the system. Nevertheless the studies about how managers bring energy to the organization have been separated from the studies as to how structures emerge and evolve. The effort level in organizations changes if managers push them toward new activities, bring new challenges and goals to the members’ attention, form and break connections inside and outside, change the awarding systems. [...] Understanding causes and conditions of an input of energy in the system in a network under agents’ evolution is an important topic for future research.

And Gharajedaghi [29, pp. 84–85] adds: “Power is like knowledge. It can be duplicated. The conceptualization of power as an entity summing up to non-zero is the critical step in order to understand the essence of empowerment and the ‘many-minded’ systems management. Empowerment is neither, therefore, power renunciation nor power sharing. It’s power duplication.”

Lowney [38, p. 89], in his book *Heroic Leadership*, underlines that “Practicing leadership means having an influence, having a precise vision,

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