ForeWord Reviews

BUSINESS & ECONOMICS

Full Steam Ahead! Unleash the Power of Vision in Your Company and Your Life

Jesse Stoner
Ken Blanchard
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The transformational power of a compelling vision in one's life or business is compared in this book to the impact of the steam engine on modern industrialization. Like the first steam locomotives or steamships, "full steam ahead" means "being fully powered, knowing where you're going, and moving ahead full force."

The authors use this analogy throughout the book to emphasize the power of a strong vision, or purpose, and the commitment to stay on course and achieve that vision despite obstacles. Written in the storytelling style reminiscent of Blanchard's best-selling book The One Minute Manager, this book has a style different from most others in the general business category. It reads more like a novel, in which the two main characters apply the principles of creating a vision for their lives and their business. The concept of developing a compelling vision is taught through the revelations of a company owner trying to put the spark back into his company's vision and an employee trying to establish a personal family vision to improve her relationship with her children.

The book focuses on three key elements of an effective vision: purpose, values, and a picture of the future. It refers to the Apollo Moon Project to illustrate the distinction between a goal and a vision: "a vision is enduring." It advises readers to "focus on the end result, not the process for getting there." It also offers a checklist to use to test whether a vision is compelling.

The book was inspired by years of experience with organizations, which uncovered the fact than "less than 10 percent of organizations…had a clear purpose, a set of operating values, or a picture of the future." Blanchard is a renowned speaker, consultant, author or co-author of more than thirty books, and owner of The Ken Blanchard Companies. Stoner, also a respected speaker, consultant, and author, is president of Seapoint Center, established to provide training in personal and professional leadership and vision creation.

While it seems that as much of the book is spent developing the characters as discussing the elements of vision, the story is successful in holding the reader's attention and clearly

getting the point across. Like the dream of Martin Luther King that still lives on, “the mark of a true visionary leader is that the vision continues beyond the lifetime of the person who articulated it.”

Cindy Kryszak