



## 2020 Vision and Beyond

By Susan Schilke; February 1, 2020

We're one month into a new decade, and it is the time of year many of us focus on vision – for ourselves and our organizations. For 2020, I went with a somewhat obvious one word of **Vision**. At TeamStrength, our focus on making great leaders better starts with taking aim which requires a clear target or vision. In 2020, I will keep this word top of mind in coaching, and in crafting plans for myself and TeamStrength.

Our important accomplishments happen twice – the first in our mind and imagination, the second in the realized result of vision and planning. Stephen Covey writes about this in the Habit #2 from The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People – **Begin with the end in mind**. I struggle with this. My mind and energies are easily focused on figuring out the next steps, short-term plans and targets I can see. I am not good at visualizing what could be. I am that person that needs to move furniture multiple times so that I can literally see what it looks like – because I just can't picture it.

I challenge myself – and TeamStrength members – to think into the future. Each year, we craft our annual vision. This 'Snapshot Letter' is a narrative from the perspective of year-end, and describes our accomplishments as if they've already happened. It's a different approach to begin with the end in mind and then design it to focus on the actions that get you there. When you write about goals in past tense, you force yourself to anticipate obstacles, map out milestones, identify allies and partners, and craft an action plan to achievement.

We developed a two-page Goal Designing Worksheet with categories and questions designed to help identify your best opportunities each year. 'Is your overall team stronger than a year ago?' 'Do you have a measurable way to track customer satisfaction? Is it improving?' These prompts get you thinking about what to focus your organization on. On the personal side, 'Do you have a regular fitness regimen you practice most weeks of the year?' and 'Are you taking regular vacations where you disconnect from your day-to-day?' help you remember to focus on you first.

Writing the letter each year has huge rewards for me, because I tend to be an in-the-moment person. It forces me to think beyond today or next week or next month. In 2020, I will take that even further and create 3-, 5- and 10-year goals for myself and TeamStrength. I encourage each of you to do the same. This month I am asking members where they see themselves and their organization in five years. I am sure most will have ready answers, because vision is a big part of leadership.

I will also use the TeamStrength Five-Year Goals structure to design longer term plans for TeamStrength. It starts with revenue and profit targets, then works through the details of how that happens with strategies, structure and leadership changes. As you lay the groundwork, the targets may shift as well, and the entire process helps create vision and an action plan.

The starting point on my journey for 2020 Vision – and yours, too – is carving out time for thinking ahead. This is an increasing challenge because there is always plenty to do and a million distractions in our world. So practice Habit #1: Be Proactive, and schedule blocks of time each week or month for a critical meeting with you and your plans. Use this time to assess where you are, where want to go, and how you will get there. Take aim at your goals, and use our resources to help!