

Who do you want to be?

We've provided a high level summary of [the Vista Growth Process](#), and [delved deeply into Step 1 of the process](#). Now that we've established that foundation - the starting point of the journey, the snapshot of where the brand is exactly today - we are ready to move on to step two. It is in this phase of the Vista Growth Process that the great vision of the courageous leader either comes out naturally, or is brought out through creative exercises to remove any and all limits on the thinking of the leadership team.

Step 2 of the Vista Growth Process determines the answer to one question: *Who do you want to be?*

Words matter, and the wording of this question is not without intent. "*Who do you want to be?*" The key word is "want", not *can* or *can't* or *might* or *may* or *wish* or *think*, but **WANT**. When the founder(s) started the organization, he or she or they had a dream. Is that dream still alive today? What was the original vision for the company? What did the founder(s) want to create?

Who's crazy now?

Bill Gates didn't ever dream of having a small computer software company that met the needs of a single market segment. No, he boldly stated that his goal was to have a computer on every desk. In the late 1970s or early 1980s, that was indeed an audacious goal. And yet that dream has come true and then some and then some and then some. How many "computer" devices does the average American own today?

It sounded crazy then. Many people asked the question, "what would an individual do with a computer?" Now *they* sound crazy. Step two is about sounding crazy today, and looking years into the future and dreaming of what could possibly be. How high is the sky? How far can you see? How many people would say your vision is crazy if they heard it right now? That's the idea of step two: *dream*.

Unlock your brains!

The problem is that most people, in their day to day work function, their comfort zone, their established routine, have forgotten how to dream big. They've not flexed that muscle for so long that they've forgotten how it feels to keep on saying, "*what if? but what if? and what if?*" Such is usually the biggest obstacle in step two: teaching people how to dream again.

To knock down that barrier, we engage the leadership teams into different exercises that get them out of that normal routine, both physically and mentally, freeing their minds up to dream big, crazy, audacious dreams. Here are two examples of those exercises.

1. We split leadership team into two groups, and assign them each the task of drawing themselves on the whiteboard using stick figure drawing. We literally ask them to draw stick representative of themselves. It's amazing how much creativity comes from this simple effort.
2. We assign each of the two groups a 3-minute task: write as many things can you think of that a paper clip could be used to do *other than* clipping paper. Not what's the best idea or the most creative or the most outlandish, but rather a contest to generate a *quantity* of ideas in a short period of time. No debating or belaboring the ideas, just the biggest list you can come up with. The team that generates the most ideas - good or bad - wins that exercise.

These two exercises, and others like them, loosen up the team members, and allow them permission and freedom and energy to think bigger than they are used to thinking every day. Once the leadership team is loose and thinking and dreaming big, we change things up a bit by bringing in other team members, in addition to the previously identified leadership team.

Future-casting

What we call "future-casting" sessions are critical for any culture to do something that might be considered a "breakthrough." These sessions are usually considered the most valuable activities to help someone innovate, create something that is breakthrough. It is here in these future casting sessions that we uncover themes, ideas, and opportunities for the organization to realize a better future and for all of the company's products, services, and experiences to be better.

These sessions take on an new shape, in order to really mix things up. We identify 4 - 5 themes, and then spend 4-5 hours per theme, with 5 - 7 people per future-casting team. Each team tackles a different theme that the brand wants to address completely.

These themes are some of the big huge audacious goals that have been identified in the wide open, sky-is-the-limit sessions, such as an IPO, or a huge milestone. The Vista team then gathers groups of approximately 7 people from brand to spend two or three hours talking about these big, audacious dreams and visions.

These "theme teams" are made up of some of the leadership team, but also include what we refer to as those team players that possess "unofficial power", meaning they are bright and full of ideas, and people in the organization naturally look to them for leadership, but they don't have big titles, and don't usually care about the organization's "sacred cows." These unofficial leaders are critical to the audaciousness of the dreams.

Rules of Engagement

That's who and how we go about this step, but there is another key element, and that's the structure around this stage. There is very little friction in this stage, by definition because there is no wrong answers when we're dreaming, and we ask to everyone to defer judgement on every idea, so all conversations are open. Imagine a conversation in which every idea, no matter how crazy, was accepted and added to the list of possibilities!

Also, the teams are very carefully chosen, and we intentionally avoid the "no man" or "naysayer". It is quite helpful at this point to have the open conversation of understanding that there are indeed some personalities that tend to shoot down ideas first, and then ask questions later. That's ok. If someone struggles with that, they can skip that session, or just observe with no comments.

We have also, at appropriate times and depending on the size of the leadership team and the organization, brought in individuals who are connected to the organization, personally or professionally, but are not at all part of the team. Doing so brings a completely fresh voice to the conversation for no other reason than that individual doesn't bring the same views or baggage to the table.

Finally, there are the "rules of the road," which we borrow from IDO. Those rules are as follows:

1. build on the ideas of others
2. defer judgement
3. one conversation at a time
4. encourage wild ideas
5. stay focused on the topic

The creative exercises, team choices, and rules of the road all work to help unlock great ideas from the culture that are designed to make the firm better, the products better, the organization more valuable, and spur the company into new era of growth.

Step two is all about the future: make the world a better place so we're a better place, our products are better, attracting more people for a winning team, happy stakeholders.