

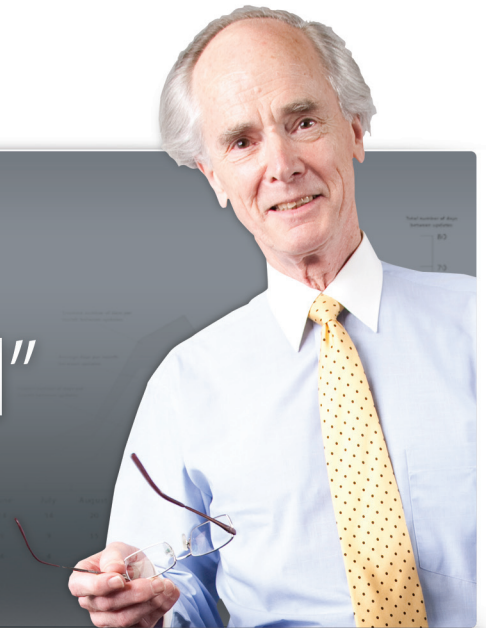
YOUR

V|E|C|I|T|I|O|R Leadership®

ACTION PACK

#8

“Energising **renewal**”



*Including
driving strategic rethink, embedding operational
innovation, re-jigging work priorities
and then getting the word out by
acting as ambassador - both internally and externally.*

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I. LEADERSHIP IN PERSPECTIVE

There's a saying that history is nothing but the stories of great men and women. It's a simplification, but one that carries an important message: individuals, particularly leaders, play a driving role in human affairs – historically and still today.

For many of us, the thing that enlivens history is the tales of key individuals and what they did. The exploits of Alexander the Great over 2,000 years ago. Or, the energy and courage of a Renaissance monarch, like Elizabeth I, expanding or protecting their territory. Or, a great industrialist of the last century, like Henry Ford. And, more recently, leaders like Margaret Thatcher changing the face of Britain, or Bill Gates building Microsoft. And, around these individuals are countless other leaders, who are part of the story.

This historical tapestry is repeated across civilizations, and across fields of human endeavour like medicine, religion, science and the arts.

Leadership is a constant presence. And, interestingly, many of the success factors have not really changed. Leaders have always set goals and created visions of future possibilities. They've demonstrated technical proficiency (for example, at the head of their army – or revolution) to earn credibility. Above all, they've engaged people to join the journey they have in mind. Inspiring, encouraging, guiding and rewarding them.

It's not surprising, therefore, that we still refer to books that pre-date Alexander, such as Sun Tzu's "The Art of War", or ones that guided leaders 500 years ago, such as Machiavelli's "The Prince". Writers in the last century poured out books on leadership. Much of their advice was repetitive, and much was contradictory. But there were new insights offered by a few, like Peter Drucker, responding to contemporary commercial and social realities.

So, there's a lot you can learn from the past. Much stays the same. But **your make-or-break challenge is the uniqueness of your specific situation**. The mix of your operational challenges and the people you're leading. Reading helps. But in the end, you're on your own.

So, as you work through this Leadership Action Pack, take what is useful and reject what isn't. But, above all, regard it as input – not the answer. That's yours to find: the necessary and most effective **leadership actions** to take. I return to this challenge at the end of the bio that follows; I may even have some pointers for you.

II. TIMOTHY PASCOE: BIO, LEADERSHIP COMMITMENT AND TESTIMONIALS

I have set out my biography below in three parts: my father, myself, and other leaders. Each part relates to a particular driver of my leadership development and thinking.

My father. I only knew him for ten years – from his return after World War II until his death in 1956. But, he and his story were the start of my interest in leadership. He was self-made, having left school at 12, worked in northern South Australia, and then signed up during World War I with an Australian Light Horse regiment. He served in the Middle East, was promoted and became a successful officer. Between the wars, back in South Australia, he started an engineering business. But when WWII started, despite being over age, he signed up again and finished in 1945 as a Brigadier and Commandant of Lae Base in New Guinea. He returned home, resuscitated his business and later took it public. But, he lost focus and it nearly failed. His last two years were spent re-establishing it.

His energy, smarts, people skills and creativity (particularly in adversity) are still vivid for me. But, so is his waywardness and lack of financial prudence. All leadership issues.

Myself. In contrast to my father, I had every advantage in my early upbringing. I studied Engineering (and Economics in parallel), won a scholarship to do a PhD at Cambridge, and then did an MBA at Harvard. I joined McKinsey in New York - a worldwide management consulting firm that focuses on solving issues of concern to senior management. I later opened their office in Sydney.

I ran a venture capital company for three years, got involved in politics (turning around a moribund party machine), started a non-profit to provide private sector funding and management skills to the arts, was appointed Executive Chairman of the Australia Council (the Australian Government's arts policy and funding body), and then went back to business consulting 20 years ago – but on my own, focusing on strategy and later on leadership.

In 2004, my decades of voluntary work for non-profits was recognised by my appointment as a Member of the Order of Australia, for service to the arts and community organisations.

My successes and, more importantly, my failures, were my toughest tutors. I came to realise I lacked my father's natural people skills and was far too controlling – both of these weaknesses stemmed, at least in part, from over-belief in my own ability. And, these realisations plus feedback from colleagues continued my leadership development.

Other leaders. I've been privileged to work with some great leaders who've been at the top of their fields – in business, the professions, politics, the arts and elsewhere. And, as a colleague, friend or consultant, I've been able to talk with them about how they operate.

As a compulsive categoriser, over the last twenty years I've structured my leadership learnings - focusing on what works, rather than on theory. The result is a practical tool. It extends business planning to cover **what YOU, as the leader, must do** to give traction to what your business, division or team needs to achieve.

My V|E|C|I|T|O|R framework helps you identify concerns holding your people back, and the actions to address them. It bridges the hard (market and technical) and the soft (people and culture) issues of leadership. And, it produces an **action list**. It started as a consulting tool; and it's now online as well. Above all, it's where I've been heading all my life. This Leadership Action Pack is a sample of what it's about. I hope you find it valuable.

Leadership is neither born, nor bred. It's planned!



TESTIMONIALS

“Your planning process is superb”

Paul Sprokkreeff, CEO Web Profits Pty Ltd

“Really valuable: our top team are all using it and we workshop our plans together”

Robbie Cooke, Managing Director, Wotif.com

“Excellent ... very simple but very effective”

Paul Masi, CEO Merrill Lynch Australia

“My advice: just try it!”

Toby Marshall, Social Media author and strategist

“Resource material is best I've seen”

Neil Weeks, CEO Australian Reinsurance Pool Corp'n.

“Directly contributed to better service ... and profitability”

Adam Simpson, Simpsons Solicitors

“I find this process stimulating and inspiring”

Dr Rose Alwyn, Master, St Mark's College, University of Adelaide

III. ENERGISING RENEWAL

Your takeaways from this Leadership Action Pack will be:



- ➔ **Guidelines for ensuring you keep your business competitive.** Avoiding the decay that comes from ignoring changes in the economy and marketplace. Focusing on the need to rethink strategy and upgrade your products and services – and how they're produced and delivered. And hence, continual reshaping of work priorities for you and your people. What was important five (or perhaps even one) year ago, may no longer be appropriate. And all of this needs to be communicated to your staff, customers, and clients – and to the market more broadly. This pack will give you pointers in relation to each of these topics.
- ➔ **Your Personal Action List** that's driven off the steps needed to define the new way forward and the drivers of its success. But, focusing particularly on what **you, as the leader, need to do to** get things redirected and enthuse your people about the new priorities – thereby driving implementation.

This is not business as usual. It is about achieving **the magic ingredient of total commitment:** your people's willingness to give their jobs everything they've got. A determination to win.

The first four articles in this Pack provide thought-starters around:

1. **Driving strategic re-think:** having first understood the changes taking place in your environment, then focusing in on your own operations and how they need to change.
2. **Embedding operational innovation and continuous improvement:** constant change is the new status quo; and, the price you pay is constant review and updating.
3. **Re-jigging work priorities and schedules for yourself and others:** this sounds mechanical, but otherwise renewal fails since strategic and operational shifts require the leadership team to change how they allocate their time and effort – particularly you!
4. **Acting as an ambassador – internally and externally:** seeking feedback as well as presenting the case (for change and its exciting opportunities) to your team, organisation, and market stakeholders.

GETTING TRACTION

Following these four articles, we've included a blank sheet on which to draft your **Action Pack Plan**. We've inserted the above four action headings to stimulate and focus your thinking.

Your task is to bring this blank sheet alive as a tool to increase business growth and profitability and your excellence as a leader. There are three steps:

1. **Reflect on what you've read** in terms of your current business and organisational challenges and the needs of the people you're leading – particularly concerns that may be holding them back from full commitment to, and enthusiasm for, the necessary strategic changes.
2. **Define what actions you should take** – what you're going to do (adding your unique contribution) in addressing market or technical issues, or the alignment and empowerment of your people – and the culture in which they work – to deliver new performance drivers.
3. **Check each action is clear, actionable and measurable** in terms of what you're doing, who's involved and the deadline for completion.

We'll return to these steps again later.

To thank you for purchasing this Pack, we're including three extra bonus articles – from our archive of Pascoe's Potshots. These deal with broader leadership topics, and illustrate what you can read on [my blog](#). There's a new one (and often other new material) each week. And, you're invited to comment – joining a dialogue with other leaders.

After the bonus Potshots, there's a brief background note on V|E|C|I|T|O|R Leadership® to round out your understanding of what it's about – and how it can help you.

And, finally, a page about other V|E|C|I|T|O|R **Leadership Action Packs** you may want to buy – to take your thinking and planning further. Plus, details on our two **online tools**, the top-end V|E|C|I|T|O|R offerings. These enable you to:

- ➡ **Develop a full Leadership Action Plan:** working through a three-stage process identifying key issues holding your people back, the types of leadership actions needed to address them, and your specific commitments – your Personal Action List.
- ➡ **Solve a pressing Leadership Problem:** clarifying an issue you and your team are facing, and what you need to do so the matter is resolved.

ARTICLE #1

DRIVING STRATEGIC RETHINK

*You can establish first-mover advantage and improve competitive positioning;
avoiding blind-siding and loss of relevance*

General Motors was once a paragon of American business. It has more recently been in serious decline. Its plight illustrates what a famous economist called “creative destruction.” New industries, products, and services rise to prominence, but later lose their traction. Horse-drawn carriages gave way to automobiles – ushering in gas stations but destroying buggy-whip manufacturers. Gas guzzlers had their time on the road, but were overtaken by energy-efficient compacts. And now hybrids; and, so on.

Where does your industry and your company, division, or team **fit in its relevant continuum of rising and declining fortunes?** And, what are you doing about it? Are you fat and happy; or, lean and on the look out? Today, you’d better be the latter: scanning the horizon to see what’s moving – **reading the research** and **listening to the newsletters**. There’s only the quick and the dead. And a key component of staying alive is your capacity to rethink your strategy.

Many companies believe strategy is something you do every few years - setting and forgetting. In part, that’s true. Mostly, you don’t need to revolutionise things every year. Nor could most companies handle it. But honing and reshaping is continuous.

Here are four action points:

- ➡ **Review and update the four or five most important assumptions behind your current business model:** go back to basics and find what needs to change.
- ➡ **Shortlist the external factors that could blindside you:** be paranoid; watch your competitors’ products and technologies, and what’s coming out of research establishments.
- ➡ **Recast your vision, goals and policies for future competitive advantage:** come up with a newly relevant view of your organisation and what it is going to be doing, and for whom.
- ➡ **Build ownership and commitment to the new model:** involve people and make sure they feel part of making the map, which will define the renewed journey.

For several decades, I consulted on strategy with corporate executive teams. Regardless of industry or country, their concerns were common: what are the new **industry trends** and **competitive developments?** What’s our new **vision** (and quantified goals) and our **differentiation?** What are the major **strategic gaps** we need to address? And, **what must we do TODAY** to start the new journey - and ensure we’re still **market leader** tomorrow?

Here are two **mini-cases** illustrating some of the issues above:

Positive example ...

Jumping the waves – CEO, government corporation. He had started his job facing a massive turnaround of this poorly managed business, to make it viable in the face of a market being opened to competition. Two years on, with the turnaround under control, he addressed the need to establish market leadership with a three-fold strategy: development of IP (lost under previous management); first-mover advantage in the use of new technology; and, re-invigorated training and upgrading of staff. He significantly improved profitability, customer relations, and employee satisfaction.

Negative example ...

High art – Director, public contemporary art museum. She had achieved significant standing based on deep “industry” knowledge, operational efficiency, and sensitivity to the needs of artists. She was also aware of environmental changes in terms of increased competition (from commercial galleries and the new media); also, the economic pincer of higher operating costs and scarcer funding. However, she was unable to translate these trends into strategic and operational change programs, or convince staff of the need for change. The board had to seek a new director to formulate and implement a new strategy.

Finally, here are **six questions** to test your thinking:

1. What assumptions about your business have you revised this year?
2. What additional assumptions are you reviewing – and what outcome do you expect?
3. What strategic or operational changes do you currently have in train?
4. If you had to start your operation again, would you set it up the same way as last time?
5. Which of your competencies are now out of date, and what are you doing about each one?
6. Is the team committed and on board with all the changes – or hanging back? Why?

ARTICLE #2

EMBEDDING OPERATIONAL INNOVATION – AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

You can build competitive advantage and market leadership, and engage staff; replacing tired products and services, as well as outmoded infrastructure and systems

New ways often bring new words; or reinvigorate old ones. “Betterment” is a case of the latter – and something every leader must deliver. A strategic rethink may set a whole new direction for your business. However, between these major shifts, there’s lots of room for innovation and upgrades. That’s betterment.

Some years ago, a friend showed me her iPod – one of the first. A year or so later, I went to buy one. But I was faced with all sorts of new models with different capacities, functions and styles. I bought a “nano.” It was pretty fancy. But after another year, it was out of date. That again is betterment.

Would your customers and staff say your organisation is like Apple? Or, behind the curve: stuck with old products and old ways? What would competitors say? Do they watch you or ignore you? And what about your role? Ask yourself some questions!

What can I do to **encourage innovation**? Do I give people space to **question how things are done**? Do I **listen to new ideas**? Do I **let people tinker**? Do I **reward creativity**? **What innovations have I initiated** or backed this year?

Of the hundreds of businesses I’ve consulted to, many exhibited innovation. But mostly, it was only evident in parts of the organisation. Why? Because only some of each organisation’s leaders had the courage for **openness, questioning** and **testing** everything.

Below are five guidelines from those that succeeded:

- ➔ **Find at least three ways in which you can legitimise and reward new product/service ideas:** everyone must feel responsible for improving what you sell.
- ➔ **Identify three quality or operational innovations to keep ahead of your competitors:** don’t dismiss what they’re doing as fads or trivial; learn from them.
- ➔ **For each major system, find two innovations to implement this year:** this is a key lever for reducing costs and improving efficiency.
- ➔ **Each year, find at least one business-model innovation:** use these to lift operating margins and profitability – or access different markets.
- ➔ **Become the person who champions creativity and experimentation:** ensure every team is testing some part of what they do all the time, and finding how to do it better.

Here are two **mini-cases** illustrating some of the issues raised on the previous page:

Positive example ...

Annual renewal – Owner, fashion business. She had built her business with a consistent quality and positioning, but always adding ideas that would make her clothes more appealing to her established (and expanding) customer base. More than most of her competitors, she knew how to walk the line between fashion and failure. She understood the need for innovation and creativity, but also the risk of stretching too far. A devoted following – and several decades of consistent success – attested to her skill.

Negative example ...

Yet another minor improvement – Entrepreneur, electronics. This self-trained engineer developed significant prowess as a designer of high-tech products, but every time one got close to market success, more minor upgrades would be made delaying delivery, changing specifications and generally confusing the customers and staff. Not surprisingly, there were no profits and eventually no company.

Finally, here are **six questions** to test your thinking:

1. When did you last hold a team meeting to brainstorm and discuss new product/service ideas?
2. What program do you have in place to ensure all production and operational processes are reviewed regularly?
3. Is there an incentive system for people who contribute ideas? How well is it working?
4. What are the key experiments in progress at present – and how are they going?
5. What is on the list of experiments for testing next year?
6. What percentage of this year's sales are from products or services initiated in the last three years?

ARTICLE #3

RE-JIGGING WORK PRIORITIES AND SCHEDULES

You can increase time and energy focused on critical issues and hence strategic value add; abolishing irrelevant meetings and other time-wasters that frustrate progress

When did you last reprioritise your diary? But that's the easy part. When did you actually **stop doing something**? Dropped, finished, gone! That's the tough one.

Leaders find it hard to shed commitments – at times, even to delegate. They feel responsible. This is part of the reason they're leaders. But too many commitments can lead to fragmentation and doing nothing well. And, your people may notice and talk (at least behind your back). To them, your priorities could seem inefficient, time-wasting, or even selfish.

Often the low priority items were once important. But today, where do they rate? Yes, your predecessor supported them. But so what? Or, you may enjoy them. But again, so what? The question is **where and why do they fit in your priorities today?**

Classic diary barnacles and time-wasters are irrelevant **meetings**. And unproductive **social or industry events**. And unnecessary **travel**. Wow, there's a time waster. Particularly today when so much can be done online or by video conference. What was the value-add from your most recent meeting, dinner, or trip?

When did you last sit down (alone or, even better, with someone else) to **establish criteria** and **evaluate each commitment** in your diary – **particularly the recurring ones**? Few people do it. They just keep on shuffling. None of us like saying "no". But that's what effective leaders do.

Here are four action opportunities:

- ➡ **Identify and create time for your four most important new market or internal tasks:** don't assume they'll just fit in somewhere or somehow; find things to cut.
- ➡ **Reprioritise the repetitive time allocations in your daily, weekly and monthly schedules:** culling current agendas and diary commitments – remembering that most leaders' estimates of their time allocations are way wrong.
- ➡ **Delegate, delay, or stop activities you can (or should) no longer handle:** and let people know what you've done.
- ➡ **Get each of your direct reports to implement the above three steps as well:** if your priorities change, I guarantee theirs will have to, too.

Prioritise now – if you want to avoid the crash later!

Here are two **mini-cases** illustrating some of the issues raised on the previous page:

Positive example ...

Not on my list – Owner, office services. She was a busy entrepreneur, ambitious to grow her business and increase her personal standing and contacts – in part to build her capacity to add value in her various community involvements. She regularly reviewed her activities – and also her contact list – and culled those of low value, reallocating time to higher priority activities and people. While this was surprising to some, it was undoubtedly effective in achieving both her business and personal objectives. She is now a senior public figure and her business continues to prosper.

Negative example ...

Not serious – Managing Director, investment bank. He was a hard-working, ambitious leader in a highly competitive industry. Team members, colleagues and friends recognised that in his industry, unexpected client demands could force changes to meetings or other commitments at short notice. However, they came to recognise that the frequency of his changes went way beyond this – and most came to expect any meeting to be rescheduled several times. It became a standing joke – and reduced respect for his leadership. Some people resorted to seeking meetings only at the last minute to reduce the likelihood of cancellation and hence disruption to their own schedules.

Finally, here are **six questions** to test your thinking:

1. Do you feel your priorities are clear, and your time spent only on high-value work?
2. When did you last analyse where you spend your time, and what changes did you make?
3. What activities have you ceased doing this year?
4. Do your team regard you as having clear priorities and being well organised and efficient with your time - and theirs?
5. How many projects or meetings did you cancel or reschedule over the last two months?
6. Do colleagues feel you value other people's priorities and time as well as your own?

ARTICLE #4

ACTING AS AMBASSADOR – both internally and externally

You can improve your representation, information exchanges, and industry standing; forestalling surprises, false rumours, and being the subject of scuttlebutt

Nature abhors a vacuum. Particularly, an information gap. And if you let one arise, it may quickly fill with tall stories put about by competitors and enemies.

In olden times, ambassadors (kitted out in gold braid) travelled abroad to represent their countries: putting out messages from their kings or parliaments, and seeking news and intelligence. And, the role is still critical – for companies as much as countries. In a business, the work also includes building links with other parts of the same organisation.

All leaders have some ambassadorial work to do. This is as true for a team leader, deep inside an organisation, as it is for the CEO or chairman.

Sadly, too many leaders think representation wastes time. I recently heard a division head say dismissively, “meeting those Government guys won’t bring in any new business.” Possibly true. But it might facilitate a government contract, or provide notice of new legislation.

Ambassadorship is a so-called “soft” element of leadership – dealing with relationships and culture. But, it has to buttress the “hard” elements of commercial goals and outcomes. Achieving a multiplier effect of having your commercial strategy informed and supported by a broad constituency.

Here are four ideas to lift your performance:

- ➡ **Identify your highest-value internal peers, and build strong connections with each one; also with your boss and others:** encourage your team members to follow suit in cooperating with their colleagues elsewhere in the organisation.
- ➡ **List your half dozen top-priority clients and suppliers, and develop a relationship plan for each one; similarly with key Government and community representatives:** you need to understand the objectives of all these stakeholders as well as influence their priorities.
- ➡ **With each of the above parties, communicate regularly and appropriately; keeping them in-the-loop:** it damages your credibility if people feel left out or hear news second-hand.
- ➡ **At each meeting, seek input, ideas, feedback and assistance:** set an example to your team by being open to it; over time, make each contact into an advocate.

Here are two **mini-cases** illustrating some of the issues above:

Positive example ...

Global network – Chief Executive, listed agribusiness. He worked in the industry for several decades, rising as an executive (with a reputation for insight, performance, and dependability). Later he became a professional director. As his career developed, he served first on local and national industry committees, and later on international ones. He also widened his interests to economic and other forums. At all stages, he was effective as an ambassador for the business or associations with which he was associated. He was also sought out by the national government both for his advice, and to represent the national interest in international forums.

Negative example ...

Upward only – Local representative, international insurance business. He had been in Asia for years without achieving much – other than dexterous handling of important visitors from head office. This strategy created credibility with a strong internal group, whose importance outweighed the negative comment from product line heads concerned at the lack of business coming out of Asia. The region remained a dead spot in the organisation's activities – and detracted from its global standing.

Finally, here are **six questions** to test your thinking:

1. How do you see your role as ambassador for your team and its interests: internally; externally?
2. What rating would your team give you in this role? Where and how do you involve them?
3. How can you improve how you represent your organisation to its clients, suppliers, and other stakeholders?
4. In the last year, have you surprised people with news or information (you obtained), of which they had no prior knowledge?
5. How often do you sit down and seek feedback and ideas from your external constituencies?
6. What special assistance will you be asking for from external groups during the coming year?

IV. YOUR V|E|C|I|O|R PERSONAL ACTION LIST



After you've read the four Action Area articles, you should then develop your Personal Action List: what you're going to do to get those Action Areas addressed. You won't be doing all the analysis and legwork to renew the strategy and drive the business forward – or writing all the plans to energise renewal. Your challenge is to find that smaller set of actions, which are peculiarly yours. **Things only you can do, or where you add unique value to the content or process.**

To decide on your actions, the question to ask yourself is this: **what would my people say I should be doing**, so that they are enthusiastic about doing the required work to go through the “creative destruction” of setting a new vision, goals, and direction?

By the example of adding your unique value, you encourage and empower others to do the rest. Your contribution may involve high-level strategic discussions with your team – and ensuring these reflect up-to-date industry input and appropriate economic and other assumptions. To this end, you may need to talk with key stakeholders within and beyond the organisation, to obtain information and ideas; and, later to inform them what the business is going to do that is different – and why.

CREATING YOUR PLAN

After this introduction, there's a blank form in which you can write **your action commitments**. As indicated earlier, your task is to bring this blank sheet alive as a tool to energise business renewal, which will keep it competitive and profitable. The three steps you need to take are:

- ➔ **Reflect on what you've read** in terms of your current business and organisational challenges and the needs of the people you're leading – particularly concerns that may be holding them back from full commitment and enthusiasm for the new path ahead.
- ➔ **Define what actions you should take** – what you're going to do (adding your unique contribution) in addressing competitor and other challenges – and also ensuring that the business has the staffing and culture to win in the new market conditions.
- ➔ **Check each action is clear, actionable and measurable** in terms of what you're doing, who's involved and the deadline for completion.

We've inserted the headings from the four Action Area articles you've read. These will act as prompts and, below them, you can insert your action commitments. Let me illustrate this using the first Action Area heading as an

ILLUSTRATION

MY V|E|C|I|T|O|I|R PERSONAL ACTION LIST

Date developed: 23 October

Period: November to January





ACTION HEADINGS AND COMMITMENTS	Deadline
<p><u>Drive strategic rethink</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ <i>Meet with key industry colleagues (MB, CT, JL and others) to discuss the government's legislative changes and how they think these will change the ground rules and likelihood of foreign competition</i> ➔ <i>Meet with my team to brainstorm specifics from the above impacting our business; and, how we should re-jig our strategy – and implications for key customers</i> ➔ <i>Get Fred and Julie from the Strategy Office to review our existing strategic plan in light of the above and prepare lists of key assumptions, issues, etc. needing clarification before the replanning starts</i> ➔ <i>Agree with my team the approach and program/deadline for finalising the new vision, goals and core strategies</i> 	<p><i>Week of 26 Oct.</i></p> <p><i>11 Nov.</i></p> <p><i>18 Nov</i></p> <p><i>Mid Dec.</i></p>

These are just examples but they may give you a sense of what could be in the first section of your Action Pack Plan. For each action, there has to be a **deadline**.

In amongst all the work, remember the **buck stops with you** – and whether the bar gets raised and is worthwhile depends first and foremost on you taking the lead and doing the things that add that unique value – and encourage others to give of their best.

MY VE|C|I|O|R PERSONAL ACTION LIST

Date developed: _____ Period: _____ to _____

ACTION HEADINGS AND COMMITMENTS	Deadline
<u>Drive strategic rethink</u> 	
<u>Embed operational innovation and continuous improvement</u> 	
<u>Re-jig work priorities and schedules for myself and others</u> 	
<u>Act as ambassador – both internally and externally</u> 	

V. YOUR BONUS POTSHOTS

LEADERSHIP: BEWARE SELF-DELUSION

You can open your eyes, keep your feet on the ground, and be realistic about yourself; not overstating your capabilities and thus undermining your credibility with colleagues

Half a dozen times in the last 20 years, I've worked with a CEO who'd completely lost touch with reality. In discussing strategy, they believed themselves as informed and proficient as they'd been in their prime. Whether talking about customers, markets, technology or staffing, they knew it all – and, worse, felt no-one was ready to succeed them. How would your team rate you on objectivity versus conceit? Are you honest about your strengths and weaknesses – and use-by date?

Here's a six-point reality-check:

- ➡ **Business drivers:** would your team say you understand the **industry success-factors** for the next leg of the business cycle? What are they?
- ➡ **Execution:** do you still drive the business plan with the same **vigour** as five years ago? Or are you keener on chairing meetings and representational roles?
- ➡ **Winning:** would people say you're committed to leading the way into **new markets**, or more concerned to protect reputation in old ones?
- ➡ **Excellence:** would competitors say you still know what's **best-in-class** and could contribute to your organisation achieving it? How are you doing that?
- ➡ **Engagement:** do you know which people in the business are really valuable – and who's not? Do you spend time with **the best members of staff**?
- ➡ **Rethink:** are you at the front edge of the **long-term reinvention** of the organisation – or resisting it? Do people test their ideas on you, or avoid your nay-saying?

We're all somewhat deluded. When young, we think we know more than we do. And, when old (notwithstanding experience), we again know less than we think. I get signals daily that remind me of my slowing memory, lack of technical knowledge and reduced stamina. But, if I'm honest (and open about it) with myself and others, we get on fine.

What destroys enterprises (and their people, particularly successors) is self-protective arrogance. A leader claiming knowledge, capability and insight ungrounded in reality. This leads to decisions (re appointments, products, investments and other business activities) that are protective (often self-protective) rather than forward looking.

So, take an hour and think through where you stand today. And, more importantly, think through what colleagues need from you if the business (and they) are going to thrive.

LEADERSHIP: DON'T WAIT FOR THE MUSIC TO STOP

*You can get serious about your leadership performance and development – today;
not be left behind – or out of a job – waiting for others to do it for you*

How's this for post-GFC reality? Eighty percent of CEOs expect big changes in their companies' strategies and operations this year! The same report also worries about succession. Two thirds of candidates won't be ready for 12 or more months. But, one third being ready seems OK to me. Surely, the real issue is raising the performance of all leaders – **NOW in their current jobs**. Not playing musical chairs later! So, what's your plan – other than waiting for the music to stop? Here are five pointers:

1. **Business plan priorities:** shortlist four or five mission-critical strategic initiatives such as entering that new high-growth market; and, similar or fewer super-urgent projects like completing the IT risk-management upgrade.
2. **Cultural and organisational priorities:** ask your people about the key friction points such as turf wars, and stumbling blocks like resourcing gaps, that are holding them back.
3. **Personal priorities:** identify your personal opportunities for distinctive value-add – for example, sitting with the marketing team to share your knowledge of market-entry dos and don'ts; or, talking with players you can uniquely influence.
4. **Leadership Action Plan:** think through and list the specific commitments and timelines for each of your actions.
5. **Communication:** share this plan with your colleagues to ensure they agree that your commitments truly represent the best use of your time, capacities and leverage.

Your business plan addresses **impersonal** market and technical concerns around “what's to be done?” And your Leadership Action Plan addresses the equally critical **inter-personal** question: “will people care?” But, if you miss the “people” part, your “business” ambitions will remain unfulfilled, and you'll fail as a leader. **We're defined by our followers:** your success depends on **their commitment**. Without their alignment, energy, and determination, you're nothing but a high paid figurehead.

In most large organisations, a lot of HR and line effort goes into training leaders and their successors. But most training is theoretical and unaccountable: based on leadership fads, academic theories, and historical feedback. And succession is more of the same, plus job rotation. There's little or no investment in leaders making **leadership plans** – what they're going to do as the team leader – rather than as the lead technician, marketer, or financier.

If you want to succeed, planning your actions is smarter than waiting for the music to stop – and hoping to land a new chair.

LEADERSHIP: NEITHER BORN NOR BRED

*You can learn to be responsive to the details of your current situation and team;
not relying on some default style that you, not your team, think appropriate*

What do Kim Jong-il, Margaret Thatcher, Bill Clinton, Carly Fiorina, Dick Fuld, Lakshmi Mittal and Conrad Black have in common? Yes, fame (or infamy). But, not necessarily life stories. For me, the link is their role as potential exemplars in the debate about leadership being the result of either “**nature**” or “**nurture**” – being “**born**” or “**bred**”. “Nature” being about birth, genes, family and early life; “nurture” about experience, development, and training. So, **which are you?**

There is evidence for the “**nature**” (or “born”) position, with Winston Churchill being an example: the descendant of a great family. But, in the West, this path is less evident today. Though, the Murdoch siblings might be adduced as contrary evidence.

There are also “natural” leaders (from any background), who, from birth, have it all: both intelligence and people skills. But, I’ve watched several such people fail because of some mix of pride, laziness, or assuming all situations are the same.

On the “**nurture**” (or “bred”) side are those who lack both golden genes and silver spoons. They have to seek education, challenges and role models. And, over time, hone a leadership approach. They too can do well; but also fail. How come?

For me, both the “born” and “bred” protagonists miss the point:

- ➡ **First, leadership is about our followers** – the people we’re leading. Too much leadership training, profiling and evaluation assumes we’re at the centre (and yes, I like attention as much as anyone). But the core is understanding what our team members need. It’s their profile, not ours, that’s important.
- ➡ **Second, leadership is variable.** It’s situation specific. In a crisis, speed, decisiveness, authority and courage may be needed. In quieter times, it may be more about patience, consultation, delegation – and a sense of humour.

So, my early enquiry above (“Which are you?”) is a trick question. It doesn’t matter whether you started with natural skills or had to work at developing them. The secret is approaching each new project or responsibility from scratch – making a Leadership Action Plan that’s specific to the situation: what you’re going to do so people follow you. It’s about them and their challenges – building their commitment and enthusiasm for the journey. It’s neither “born” nor “bred”. It’s planned.

VI. AN OVERVIEW OF V|E|C|T|O|R



The V|E|C|T|O|R framework is a leadership problem-solving tool that can help you address three central issues of effective leadership:

- Determining the concerns holding your people back from fully committing to the tasks and journey in hand;
- Identifying action areas, which they would feel address their concerns;
- Converting these into a Personal Action List of specific commitments.

You can do this for as little as \$99. And, this also brings you the following:

- ➔ Capacity to print and email your Action List – and update it whenever you wish as implementation proceeds, or conditions change.
- ➔ Resource material with additional illustrative material and case examples for the action areas in your plan.
- ➔ Our weekly Pascoe's Potshot dealing with a current or important leadership issue.

A good business plan keeps your operations ahead of the curve in meeting changing customer and market demands. Similarly, your Leadership Action Planning will ensure you lead responsively in light of both changing business requirements and their impact on the motivation and commitment of your people.

On the next page, you'll see a list of our other Leadership Action Packs, and how you can register to create your Leadership Action Plan (leading to a Personal Action List), or use our simpler Leadership Problem Solver to address a single, pressing problem.

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Let me end with a metaphor. When I was in my first year of engineering at university, we were offered two types of mathematics: pure and applied. The former was full of equations, theories and abstractions; the latter was more concerned with calculations for lifting and shifting things in the real world. In these terms, V|E|C|T|O|R is about applied leadership: on-the-job lifting and shifting to build your business or change your organisation. It's about fuelling business performance and accelerating your career.

Dr. Timothy Pascoe AM
Creator, V|E|C|T|O|R Leadership®

VII. OTHER VECTOR MATERIAL

OUR LEADERSHIP ACTION PACKS

1. Defining the path ahead http://www.vectorleadership.com/defining_the_path_ahead
2. De-risking your plans http://www.vectorleadership.com/de-risking_your_plans
3. Creating a performance culture http://www.vectorleadership.com/creating_a_performance_culture
4. Improving your people skills http://www.vectorleadership.com/improving_your_people_skills
5. Motivating your team http://www.vectorleadership.com/motivating_your_team
6. Delivering outcomes http://www.vectorleadership.com/delivering_outcomes
7. Raising the bar for everyone http://www.vectorleadership.com/raising_the_bar_for_everyone
8. Energising renewal http://www.vectorleadership.com/energising_renewal
9. Building a personal brand http://www.vectorleadership.com/building_a_personal_brand
10. Learning from the GFC http://www.vectorleadership.com/learning_from_the_gfc

PASCOE'S POTSHOTS - free

You can register for the Poshots by weekly email here:

http://www.vectorleadership.com/potshots_subscribe

Or subscribe to our RSS feed:

<http://feeds.feedburner.com/PascoesPotshots>

Or browse and search the Potshot archive:

<http://www.vectorleadership.com/potshots>

OUR ONLINE TOOL KIT OFFERINGS - from \$99

View the VECTOR Leadership Toolkit and purchase credits to start working with it here:

http://www.vectorleadership.com/tool_kit