

STRATEGY & VISION

Reading time ~ 5 min.

"The greatest people are self-managing. They don't need to be managed. Once they know what to do, they will go figure out how to do it and they don't need to be managed at all. What they need is a common vision and that is what leadership is. Leadership means having a vision, being able to articulate it so that people around you can understand it, and getting a consensus on a common vision.

I consider the most important job of someone like myself is recruiting. Once you get a group of around ten great people, that group becomes self-policing as to who they let into that group."

Steve Jobs

By definition, strategy and vision are about the long-term. People, businesses and organisations often develop strategies, **but can a country or a nation have a vision or strategy?** Do countries such as France, Canada or Britain have a strategy, and if yes, where is it written?

In a democracy, governments change every four to five years, not enough time to develop and implement a vision. The next government may have a completely different vision, and in fact, this is often what happens. So how can a democratically elected government implement a strategy if it doesn't have enough time?

Ironically, it is easier to develop and implement a vision in authoritarian countries, where the same regime is in power for twenty to thirty years. Singapore, Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Qatar, China and even South Korea in 1970s and 1980s are all examples of authoritarian regimes developing and implementing a vision. The worst of all choices is, of course, an authoritarian regime without a vision.

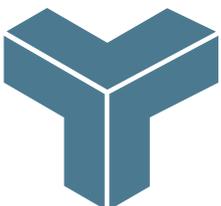
But what about a young and a developing country such as Armenia, trying its luck on a path towards democracy? How can it have a vision or a strategy if its government changes every two to three years? Does it have to go through a dictatorship prior to becoming a democracy? The same question applies to lots of other developing countries, from Uruguay and Peru to Georgia and Ukraine. See our report entitled **Why the Worst Rise to the Top** on this topic.

The answer is simple: *"I know no safe depository of the ultimate powers of the society but the people themselves; and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them, but to inform their discretion.*"

Thomas Jefferson

The strategy of mature democracies such as Britain, Canada or France is reflected in their constitutions, which codify the main values, beliefs and principles of their societies and protect them against elected governments. Governments are unable to change constitutions without people's consent, and **if people are educated/informed**, they will make the right decisions.

Therefore, the vision of a young developing country such as Armenia must be stipulated in its constitution. It must be clearly explained in all schools and universities, and actively discussed in press and social media. In this case the people will be educated and informed and will become *"the safe depository of the ultimate powers."* Only then will the nation force its government – any government – to uphold the constitution and thereby stick to the vision and strategy.



In more mature democracies, constitutions – written or unwritten – are protected by powerful institutions such as the free press, independent courts, unbiased governmental organisations and by the society at large. But for a young and a developing state, the first and the most important step is for that vision/strategy to be understood and embraced by the entire nation, and if we think the people are not ready “*the remedy is not to take it from them, but to inform their discretion.*” Only then will the people become “*self-managing and self-policing.*”

Vision and leadership go hand in hand. Just like leaders must communicate all the time, vision and strategy must be constantly discussed and explained. Leaders can not overcommunicate because there is a constant need to hear and evaluate their vision and thoughts. Leadership and overcommunication are two mutually exclusive concepts. Leaders who do not communicate often enough eventually create confusion and misunderstanding. The same logic applies to vision and strategy – they must be constantly communicated and explained.

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