

"It takes not one but two entrepreneurs to build a great company. Gino and Mark show how that relationship can provide the 'rocket fuel' your company needs to achieve its full potential."

—BO BURLINGHAM, Editor-at-Large, *Inc.* magazine



**ROCKET
FUEL**

*THE ONE ESSENTIAL COMBINATION THAT WILL GET
YOU MORE OF WHAT YOU WANT FROM YOUR BUSINESS*

GINO WICKMAN AND MARK C. WINTERS

PRAISE FOR *ROCKET FUEL*

“*Rocket Fuel* is a powerful model for freeing up entrepreneurial Visionaries to do what they do best. It fills a void that undermines most entrepreneurial companies. Gino and Mark provide a practical game plan for building an organization that perfectly combines vision and integration.”

—Dan Sullivan
President and Founder, Strategic Coach®

“Contrary to popular belief, it takes not one but two entrepreneurs to build a great company, and they have dramatically different roles. In this brilliant book, Gino Wickman and Mark C. Winters explain the vital importance of having both a Visionary and an Integrator—and show how that relationship can provide the ‘rocket fuel’ your company needs to achieve its full potential.”

—Bo Burlingham
Editor-at-Large, Inc. magazine, and author of Small Giants and Finish Big: How Great Entrepreneurs Exit Their Companies on Top

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***GINO WICKMAN
AND MARK C. WINTERS***



BenBella Books, Inc.
Dallas, TX

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To the entrepreneur:

The 3% that creates 66% of the jobs. This book should help you create a few more.

—Gino Wickman

To Dad, R.L. Winters, MD:

The hands of a healer, a heart for the Lord, and the adventurous spirit of an entrepreneur . . . You've taught me so much. I marvel at the number of lives you've impacted—none more than mine.

And also to my beautiful wife, Beth, and my sons, Austin, Blake, and Carson:

Everything is better when I'm with you. You are my world. I love you beyond words.

—Mark C. Winters

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VISIONARY—**vi·sion·ary**, *noun* \ 'vi-zhə- ,ner-ē\,

First Known Use: 1702

- : one who has clear ideas about what should happen or be done in the future
- : one who has a powerful imagination
- : one who sees visions
- : one who has unusual foresight

Dreamer, Seer, Creator

INTEGRATOR—**in·te·gra·tor**, *noun* \in-tə,-grā-tər\,

First Known Use: 1876

- : one who integrates
- : one who harmoniously unites the major functions of a business
- : one who keeps the trains running on time
- : one who creates focus, accountability, and alignment

Right Hand, Number Two, Steady Force

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INTRODUCTION

THE DISCOVERY

This book is a how-to manual for understanding and managing the relationship between a “Visionary” and an “Integrator.” It will help you crystallize the meanings of these two roles and take your company to the next level. You will learn to utilize this partnership the right way to free yourself up, maximize your potential, and achieve everything you want from your business.

AS A VISIONARY

This is the right book for you if:

- You are an owner, founder, co-founder, or partner in a small business and you are feeling stuck, frustrated, overwhelmed, or out of control.
- You want a great second-in-command to free you up to go to the next level.

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- You are not sure about looking for a president, general manager, or COO.
- You want to maximize the existing relationship with your Integrator.

AS AN INTEGRATOR

This is the right book for you if:

- You have all of the characteristics of a strong second-in-command and want to put those skills to use.
- You are sitting in the #2 seat in an organization and want to help take it to the next level.
- You are a partner to a “Visionary” type, and the relationship is strained, frustrated, or just not working right.

The message in this book is based on a discovery Gino made over 20 years ago. He applied it to a family business that he co-owned and ran for more than eight years before successfully selling the company. He has personally researched, taught, and validated this concept, working hands-on with over 125 companies and applying it directly through more than 1,500 full-day sessions with owners and leadership teams. It has been further validated by a team of dedicated EOS Implementers working with thousands of companies and by business owners in more than 10,000 companies who have read and applied the concepts outlined in two other books he has written.

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It is important to note that the companies we typically work with generate revenues of \$2–\$50 million and range in size from 10 to 250 people. While this discovery also works with companies both larger and smaller than that range, this is our target market where these principles have been mainly validated.

What is the discovery Gino made? There are two distinct types of leaders in all small businesses: the “Visionary” and the “Integrator.” One sees the future, and the other makes it happen. These two roles could not be more different from each other. That is why it is magic when they work well together. Famous examples include the combination of Walt and Roy Disney at Disney, Henry Ford and James Couzens at Ford, and Ray Kroc and Fred Turner at McDonald’s. While you may think of these as large companies, they were small once. We point them out since they illustrate how vital the V/I (Visionary/Integrator) combination was in their early growth.

This book is also filled with other examples of the hundreds of thousands of unheralded small companies. While the scale is different, the two roles are still vital in building a great company. You’ll learn about real world V/I examples like Joel Pearlman and Rob Dube of imageOne (\$15 million in revenue), Randy Pruitt and David Bitel of Detroit Radiator (\$20 million), and John Pollock and Paul Boyd of Financial Gravity (\$2 million).

This discovery came about as a result of three overlapping events. They occurred in rapid succession after Gino took over running his family’s business. It was in dire need of a turnaround, and he had to act fast.

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The first presented itself while he was meeting with his amazing business mentor, Sam Cupp. Sam told Gino about the type of person he called a Visionary.

The second became apparent after working closely with his dad in those first six months. Gino realized his dad was the textbook definition of a Visionary and exhibited every trait you will learn about in this book.

The third he learned from Michael E. Gerber, author of the classic book *The E-Myth Revisited: Why Most Small Businesses Don't Work and What to Do About It*. Gerber used the term “integrator” in a recorded workshop to define what the person at the helm of an organization does with all of its major functions.

Combining these three created a context that made sense of the troubles Gino was facing. He realized that he was an Integrator, his dad was a Visionary, and bringing together their distinct God-given abilities could be magic—if utilized correctly. However, at the time, things were chaotic. Their intentions were good, but they were working at cross-purposes as they tried to save the company.

With this clarity, Gino immediately called a meeting of the three partners where he explained the new principles. By the end of the meeting, they achieved clarity on their roles going forward. They identified his dad as the Visionary and Gino as the Integrator (their third partner assumed the role of Sales Manager). They crystallized their roles and responsibilities and went into execution mode. It worked! They quickly turned the company around. After seven years of running it in their Visionary and Integrator

roles, they returned it to growth, profitability, and sustainability. And then they successfully sold it.

Since that experience, Gino has devoted all of his working time to helping people get what they want from their businesses. The V/I dynamic is a big part of what he teaches. And to quote Danielle Kennedy, a Hall of Fame speaker with the National Speakers Association, “We teach what *we* needed the most.” This passion has continued to grow. At EOS Worldwide, we now have a team of world-class EOS Implementers working with thousands of leaders and organizations to help them achieve the results they want from their businesses.

That brings in Gino’s co-author. Mark C. Winters is one of our best EOS Implementers, with 20+ incredible years of his own entrepreneurial ventures and collaborations with other business owners. Gino feels blessed to have Mark join forces with him on this important work.

“Rocket Fuel,” the title of this book, actually came from one of Mark’s clients. In a client session that he led while we were still working on the manuscript, the client casually asked Mark, “So, what’s the title going to be for your book?” Mark shared the working title, and his Visionary client responded without hesitation, “That’s not the title . . . the title is *ROCKET FUEL!*”

Mark patiently said, “Okay, tell me more.” The client went on to explain that while bringing on his own Integrator, they were leveraging a program to review individual profiles and interaction combinations for every role in their organization. When their expert reviewed the profile patterns for this Visionary and his new Integrator, he

paused to absorb the pattern. After a brief moment, he blurted, “WOW! You guys are perfect together—you’re like ROCKET FUEL!” He was right—giving birth to the title of this book. Mark has seen firsthand how their joining forces has played a big part in taking their company to the next level.

Before we begin, it is important to understand that this discovery has at its core a philosophical belief. All human beings have a God-given set of capabilities—what Dan Sullivan would call “Unique Ability®*.” Or in other words, a true skill-set or genetic makeup. The premise is that all people have one. A Visionary is meant to be a Visionary, and an Integrator is meant to be an Integrator. You are either one or the other, rarely both. One University of California professor asserts the need for both an entrepreneur and a manager at the top of a company. An entrepreneur’s lust needs to be counterbalanced with a manager’s prudence and discipline. He is making the same point that we do with the V/I relationship, simply using different terminology. When it’s structured correctly, the dynamic that exists between these two distinct leadership gifts can be magical.

We will cover everything including what the relationship should look like, how to find each other, how to work together most effectively, and how to maximize and constantly improve the relationship.

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The road ahead will not only help you crystallize how to find, form, and manage the relationship between a Visionary and Integrator, it will help you solve the tension and frustration that inevitably accompany this dynamic relationship of two people who are wired so differently from each other.

We invite you on this journey to discover which one you are—and free yourself to embrace it. That is our ultimate message. Figure out which one you are, assume that role, and excel!

We take great pride in sharing this message with you. We have the privilege of spending every day teaching business leaders. We witness the beneficial results achieved by defining and clarifying these two vital roles. With them, companies gain faster growth, more peace of mind, more freedom, higher profitability, more fun, and considerably increased cohesiveness. We have the great fortune to help liberate Visionaries from the shackles of the day-to-day details. We unleash their creativity to grow their organizations and capitalize on industry trends. Integrators find validation of their unique talent, grabbing the reins of a company day-to-day and creating organizational clarity, accountability, focus, and harmony.

What we are about to share is a science. It's real. It's powerful. When harnessed, it is very effective. It may be your way to finally break through the ceiling that's been hanging over you for so long.

PART ONE

THE CONTEXT



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CHAPTER 1

THE VISIONARY



Are you a Visionary? Has anyone ever called you that? Maybe they see something in you that you don't fully recognize about yourself—at least not yet. Or perhaps it's something you've always known.

If you are a Visionary, you are one of only 3% of the population that create two-thirds of the new jobs in our economy. (This figure comes from John F. Dini, in his book *Hunting in a Farmers World: Celebrating the Mind of an Entrepreneur*.)

The concept of the Visionary within an organization is one of the great breakthroughs experienced by our clients. We've even had them go on to teach this concept to MBA students at universities on our behalf. Understanding and implementing this concept is both eye-opening and empowering. Frankly, it has also kept some partners from killing each other. Let's explore what life looks like for a Visionary.

HERE'S WHAT VISIONARIES BRING TO AN ORGANIZATION

To start, you should realize that the following characteristics are typical attributes. No Visionary has 100% of them. A good rule of thumb is that if you match up on 80% of the traits outlined in this section, you are a Visionary.

As a Visionary you are extremely passionate about your product, service, company, and customers. When you look up “passion” in the dictionary, your picture is there. You are very entrepreneurial, a creator, and likely a founder of your firm. Most often we see *external* titles like Owner, Founder, CEO, Chairman, or President on your business card. Yet we strongly believe that *internally* referring to roles more by what people do (e.g., Visionary or Integrator) creates clarity and does a much better job than traditional corporate titles of capturing the true contribution of each person within an organization.

The Idea Generator. As a Visionary, you have lots of ideas. You typically have ten new ideas a week. Many of them may not be so good, or at least not a fit with the company's primary focus. Some may even be dangerous. However, a few are absolutely brilliant. And those few great ideas keep the organization growing. Those great ideas can take companies to the moon. For this reason, you are invaluable.

Rob Dube, the Integrator and co-owner of imageOne, a \$15 million company providing managed print services and workflow solutions, reflects on his partner and Visionary Joel Pearlman's history. Joel's “big idea” of joining a purchasing group led to considerably better margins

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and product knowledge. He then advocated selling the company and later buying it back. His vision to define the company's 10-year target of \$60 million in revenue and \$6 million in profit inspired the entire company. (Incidentally, they are on track to hit that target.) In addition, he found and closed a huge customer that represents 10% of total company revenue. Rob says, "I certainly have had to filter a lot of Joel's ideas, but none of these things would have happened if Joel were not here."

As a Visionary, you are very creative. You're great at devising solutions to big problems, not the little practical ones. You are a learner. You enjoy discovering new ideas, learning about them, and figuring out how they can work for the company. When you hit a roadblock, you study to find the answers. You teach visually, drawing diagrams on whiteboards, flip charts, yellow legal pads, napkins, or whatever happens to be within reach. A key value you bring as a Visionary is this ability to discover and figure out new ways to make things work.

"Innovators [Visionaries] find, in their lives and work, something disharmonious that common sense overlooks or denies." This quote comes from the book *The Innovator's Way*, where authors Denning and Dunham reference the book *Disclosing New Worlds* to describe this first step Visionaries take in the process of innovation.

The Big Picture. You are fantastic with important clients, vendors, suppliers, and financial relationships—the big external relationships. And you excel at closing big deals. You are really best at the high-level stuff: big ideas and solving big problems. The smaller and more detailed things become, the less they interest you. Sound familiar?

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Seeing the Future. As a Visionary, you are great with Research and Development (more “R” than “D”) for new products and services. You always have a pulse on the market/industry—and even the future needs of clients. You think strategically, always seeing the whole picture and connecting the dots. You see things that others can’t. This positions you perfectly to create and champion the company vision. You help the rest of the team understand what’s going to be necessary to stay ahead. You are great at turning your best ideas about the future into a vision—as long as you don’t have to implement any of those plans. Your vision is so strong, you are convinced the company can get there. Although you don’t yet know exactly how, that does not lessen your conviction.

Todd Sachse, the Visionary of Sachse Construction, a \$120 million general contractor, made a bold move in 2009 as the great recession descended. He decided to buck the trend of the industry and not downsize in the shrinking market. He believed that the recession would not last forever, so he viewed this as an opportunity to achieve two objectives. He wanted to hire new talent that wouldn’t otherwise be available. Plus, he wanted to maintain the vast majority of his staff for when the recession ended. This positioned the company to capitalize on opportunities that other companies couldn’t pursue because of their extreme downsizing. As a result, Sachse Construction grew 200% during and coming out of the great recession. During that same time, many other general contractors went out of business or shrank to less than half their previous size.

Because of all these amazing gifts, Visionaries are the creators of almost everything. Very little exists on our

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planet without the Visionaries of the world. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, you are the 3% of the population that creates two-thirds of the new jobs.

A Hunter Mentality. In John F. Dini's book, he calls you "Hunters," meaning that you are wired differently than most. You are always in "hunting" mode. Your type of hunting is for ideas, deals, opportunities, and solutions to big problems. Dini describes you as having "the ability to navigate in the fog," explaining you know "how to keep moving in the right direction when you don't have a compass and there aren't any signposts." He says, "Entrepreneurs [Visionaries] hunt. They don't manage. They explore rather than analyze. They build companies with vision, creativity, and tenacity; not with policies and procedures."

If most or all of what you just read describes you, you are a Visionary. Know thyself and be free!

THE VISIONARY ROLE: HERE'S WHAT YOU DO

The role of the Visionary in an organization is ultimately tailored to their specific Unique Ability®. The most common roles we see the Visionary playing are as follows:

- Entrepreneurial "spark plug"
- Inspirer
- Passion provider
- Developer of new/big ideas/breakthroughs
- Big problem solver

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- Engager and maintainer of big external relationships
- Closer of big deals
- Learner, researcher, and discoverer
- Company vision creator and champion

THE VISIONARY DNA: HERE'S WHAT YOU ARE

Our experience also shows a very consistent pattern of traits that are common to a true Visionary. They typically:

- Are the founding entrepreneur.
- Have lots of ideas/idea creation/growth ideas.
- Are strategic thinkers.
- Always see the big picture.
- Have a pulse on the industry and target market.
- Research and develop new products and services.
- Manage big external relationships (e.g., customer, vendor, industry).
- Get involved with customers and employees when vision is needed.
- Inspire people.
- Are creative problem solvers (big problems).
- Create the company vision and protect it.
- Sell and close big deals.
- Connect the dots.
- On occasion do the work, provide the service, make the product.

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THE VISIONARY CHALLENGES: HERE'S WHAT YOU AREN'T

Assuming that you now understand these wonderful traits, you might be thinking that Visionaries (perhaps you) are practically superhuman. Right?

Well, like most things in nature—with special gifts come special challenges. So, let's see what special challenges a uniquely gifted Visionary faces. Once again, a good rule of thumb is that if you possess 80% or more of the characteristics discussed in this chapter, you are a Visionary. Actually, you may be quite capable of doing many of the things that follow—you just don't enjoy them enough to keep up with them over time.

Staying Focused. For one, you get bored easily. As a result, you start creating a little chaos, just to spice things up a bit. That pattern shows up even more whenever you step into the Integrator role. Everybody gets excited about your new idea or direction. The organization has this wonderful 90-day spike in performance. Then, unfortunately, everything tends to come crashing down in a heap. And that's because the Visionary in you got bored with the day-to-day redundancy of running the business, literally self-sabotaging your own vision.

One Visionary confessed, "I get bored pretty easily, and my work energy ebbs at times." Another said, "My biggest challenge is boredom. When I find extra capacity and time I tend to meddle, filling this time by getting involved in other people's accountabilities." Yet another said, "I struggle with maintaining focus and following through." You start many different projects at once, while only a few get completed.

Too Many Ideas. Your people love your Visionary learning capability. As a lifetime learner you always need to be figuring stuff out—which you do by doing, in a very hands-on interactive way. This practice, however, can be rather disruptive. You love “breaking the mold” and pursuing the shiny stuff that really doesn’t fit with the company’s Core Focus. You have little empathy for the negative impact this has on capacity, resources, people, and profitability. As a result, your new idea can actually sabotage your best idea. This may be your Achilles’ heel as a Visionary.

Marc Schechter, Visionary and co-owner of Schechter Wealth, a premier investment advisory and advanced life insurance design firm with 40 teammates, stated, “My ever-growing wish list is always bigger than our resources are capable of tackling; it is a challenge for me to conclude with my team which ideas not to act on. I’m also challenged with my new ideas because without proper resources, they will take me away from responsibilities I have in executing the existing plan.” Another Visionary, when asked what their biggest challenges are, simply said: “Too many ideas.” And another said, “I’m always trying to get 100 pounds of sh*t into a 50-pound bag.”

In his book *The Hypomanic Edge: The Link Between (a Little) Craziness and (a Lot of) Success in America*, John D. Gartner imparts an interesting theory about Visionaries: part of their M.O. could be considered a form of mania. Gartner practices psychotherapy and is an associate professor of psychiatry at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. His powerful and enlightening book shows that many of the great Visionaries in the past may have

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been hypomanic. Gartner describes hypomania as a mild form of mania that endows a person with unusual energy, creativity, enthusiasm, and a propensity for taking risks. One notable hypomanic case referenced by Gartner is Andrew Carnegie, who built the American steel industry.

Gartner explains that the reason there are so many entrepreneurs (Visionaries) in America is that most of us are immigrants. It lies in our genes because of our forebears who had the will, optimism, and daring to leave their countries for the “promised land.”

Dan Sullivan, the creator of The Strategic Coach program, which has coached over 15,000 entrepreneurs, describes the phenomenon this way: “Entrepreneurs have an unrealistic optimism. It’s chemical in the brain. They see things others can’t.” Along the same lines, Steve Jobs of Apple was once described as having a “reality distortion field.”

Whiplash. Another trait we see often is what we refer to as “organizational whiplash.” In this case, the organization is so tuned in to the Visionary and your ideas that whenever you turn your head to the right to pursue a new idea, it forces the whole organization to the right. Then, following your natural Visionary instincts, you turn your head in the other direction, toward another idea—and WHIP! The organization tries to snap to the new direction, but it can’t keep up with the pace of the head turns. Eventually, they lose all sense of where they are headed. We can’t really hold the Visionary at fault for this one. You likely aren’t even aware that it’s happening—until the damage has been done. This leads to another dynamic that ails many organizations—a lack of consistency.

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Along these same lines, we commonly see a sort of binary behavior where you are either all in on something, or out entirely . . . and it changes back and forth—a lot. This effect is similar to someone playing with a light switch: ON-OFF-ON-OFF-ON . . . All of this can create chaos for an organization. Surprised? Or does this sound familiar?

In many cases this indicates some level of ADD. This is actually a gift because it provokes so many ideas. However, on the negative side, you are unable to pay attention to someone speaking to you unless they make their point in under 30 seconds. They don't feel like you care enough to listen. And they may even experience *more* difficulty speaking with you once they anticipate you shutting them down when they can't get their point across quickly enough. You jump from topic to topic, without a segue, making it hard for people to follow you. You think they surely have caught your point, while they may not feel comfortable stopping you to clarify—which they may well need to do a lot. Miscommunication runs rampant. You are frustrated—and so are they.

Sweating the Details. You aren't good at managing and holding people accountable, typically don't like details, don't like running the day-to-day of the business on a long-term basis, and aren't good at following through.

Clearly articulating the details of your vision to others can be quite a challenge. And having to repeat it often wears you out. A great example of how this communication problem is created appears in the book *Made to Stick*, by Chip and Dan Heath. The brothers describe a study that was done at Stanford University. Two students

would sit face-to-face. One would be given a list of 25 well-known songs and instructed to pick one and tap out the rhythm on the table for the other, who was supposed to guess the tune. Out of 120 tapped songs, the listeners guessed only three right. This illustrates an amazing point. The person tapping out “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star” hears every note perfectly in his head. He is surprised to find out that it’s only guessed right 2.5% of the time. He does not realize the listener is only hearing monotonous thumps on the table.

As a Visionary, you have a crystal-clear picture in your mind of what you want. It’s in vivid color. When you explain it, you hear the sweet sound of music. Unfortunately, much of the time it comes across to others listening as simply “thump, thump, thump.” This comes from *under-communicating* your vision. The same ability that allows you to create a vision is inextricably attached to your lack of ability to communicate it well.

Developing Talent. In *Good to Great*, Jim Collins describes one common leadership behavior pattern as “a genius with a thousand helpers.” Many Visionaries suffer from this problem. You are very bright, and likely made it this far largely on your own capabilities—expanding the company from startup to where you are today on your own brute strength. However, what got you here won’t get you to the next level. You haven’t really needed to leverage the capabilities of others, so it isn’t surprising that you’ve spent little time thinking about how to develop such resources. It is exceedingly difficult for you to attract the type of leadership that could eventually run the day-to-day without you. As an entrepreneur you don’t like

being told what to do. Your gift is actually telling other people what to do. So, you naturally order your young, high-potential, talented leaders around—and end up running them off instead of developing them.

You may even see your company as a platform from which you can display your brilliance to the world. You are a rock star, and this is your stage. Your company is your identity. This view leaves little space for talent to develop around you.

You are a competitor. While you see this trait positively, being driven to succeed in whatever you undertake, others see a very different side of you. That side makes it very difficult to build a healthy team. When you are aggressive in meetings, it makes you difficult to challenge. When frustrated, you may take a tone of condescension and appear dismissive of those who fall short of your expectations. This behavior can easily discourage healthy debate. It may even encourage the type of sycophants that blind your organization to facing the true issues your team must address in order to grow. Open and honest? Not so much. The team will progressively make fewer and fewer decisions. Why should they risk the chance of being wrong and incurring your wrath? Plus, they know their “genius” is going to make the call anyway.

In an extreme case, one unnamed client complained that her people all knew her “look.” Each one had felt the daggers that shot from their leader’s eyes whenever they had voiced an opinion that did not closely match her own. A telltale pursing of her lips was immediately followed by an explosion of heated words outlining the stupidity of their comments. The team learned fast, and didn’t fall into

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that trap more than once. They watched new employees naively walk into their own bloody ambush—it was like some cruel form of initiation. Eventually, each member of the team learned to be a good parrot—following the rules and sitting alertly at the table. Meanwhile, she could never understand why she felt so alone on this ship of hers. She lamented that she had no one else on her team as capable as she was. All the time, of course, they simply bit their tongues because they were too afraid to speak up.

Also in *Good to Great*, Jim Collins describes a clear example of a “Rugged Individualist.” In the 1960s and 1970s, a classic genius named Henry Singleton built Teledyne from an obscure little company to reach #293 on the Fortune 500 list—in just six years. Growing through aggressive acquisitions, his empire expanded to include 130 different profit centers—ranging from insurance to exotic metals. Henry was the octopus in the middle of it all—holding it together. Incredibly, he was able to do it. When he was 72, he stepped away from day-to-day management duties. He had never given much thought to succession. In less than ten years following his departure, Teledyne’s cumulative stock returns unwound—trailing the general stock market by 66%. Was he a success for achieving such heights? Or a failure for not building a great company to last after his departure?

THE VISIONARY DNA: COMMON CHALLENGES

Our experience shows us there is an obvious pattern in the aforementioned Visionary traits that tends to contribute

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to some of their biggest challenges. Those challenges are as follows:

- Inconsistency
- Organizational “whiplash,” the head turn
- Dysfunctional team, a lack of openness and honesty
- Lack of clear direction/under-communication
- Reluctance to let go
- Underdeveloped leaders and managers
- “Genius with a thousand helpers”
- Ego and feelings of value dependent on being needed by others
- Eyes (appetite) bigger than stomach; 100 pounds forced into a 50-pound bag
- Resistance to following standardized processes
- Quickly and easily bored
- No patience for the details
- Amplification of complexity and chaos
- ADD (typical, not always)
- All foot on gas pedal—with no brake
- Drive is too hard for most people

WHAT'S GETTING IN THE WAY?

If you think that you have these unique Visionary talents and aren't sure how to fully maximize them, welcome to the crowd. A lack of Visionary self-awareness is a

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common pattern. We often see this in working with hundreds of real-life Visionaries. Why didn't they initially see themselves as a true Visionary, or maximize this potential? Three reasons most frequently appear:

1. Role Awareness. You aren't aware that a stand-alone Visionary role exists in an organization. This problem is common in companies that have started from scratch. You have just done everything that was needed—until everything became too much.

Brandon Stallard, for instance, always followed his instincts in business. He built his business, TPS Logistics, from startup to 85 people by following his gut. About 12 years after startup, he learned about the Visionary role. He realized that he was the textbook definition of one, and he was overjoyed that he could spend all of his working time in the role. He clarified the role in his organization and hasn't looked back. Fitting into the role was bumpy at first, and letting go of the day-to-day reins to his Integrator took some practice. Yet his assuming the Visionary role has taken the company to a new level.

2. Ability Awareness. You aren't fully aware of your own natural gifts as a Visionary. Building a company is hard work. You put your nose to the grindstone to make sure the business kept growing. Unfortunately, always just rolling up your sleeves never clarified or helped you see your true genetic encoding.

Matt Rossetti of ROSSETTI, a world-class architectural firm with over 70 employees, always did what came naturally to him. He knew his tendencies were unusual compared to most. He always had the ability to see the

big picture, come up with great creative solutions to big problems, and inspire his team.

Says Matt, “I never realized I was a Visionary. It came slowly and gradually to me, almost as a result of finding out what I don’t do well. Once I realized I was a Visionary (others saw it long before I did), I was enormously motivated and freed to really grow and be courageous in the role . . . which it requires! I began to turn everything that wasn’t for a Visionary over to our Integrator. We have taken the company to another level!”

Still, Matt was reluctant “about being anointed as Visionary.” As he said, “It is such a sacred role. While some jump right into it, others might be more reluctant and need to be pushed in that direction. I’ll bet many good potential Visionaries miss out on the value of the role because of that.”

3. Letting Go. Your need for control, or a lack of trust, is keeping you from letting go enough to embrace the Visionary role. Like many entrepreneurs, you may be good at multiple roles. You know how to run the company—because you’ve always had to. What happens, though, when your hands aren’t big enough to hang on to it all? Of course letting go requires trust. The tools and rules we will teach you in this book will enable you to develop that trust with your Integrator. In turn, you’ll be confident that things won’t come crashing down when you finally do let go.

One Visionary (who will remain unnamed) runs a very successful company. On the outside he seems to be fine. He has won all sorts of awards and accolades. Inside

the company, however, things are chaotic. The organization is marked by a lack of accountability and consistency. His people are tired from all the fits and starts, and he is burning out. He knows something has to give, but he fears relinquishing the day-to-day control to someone else. As a result he's carrying the entire load. This state of affairs can't last forever, but as long as it does, the company is going to be filled with internal chaos.

Regardless of which of the abovementioned reasons you might be facing for not fully embracing your role as Visionary, you will find solutions in this book.

YOU ARE HERE

So, there you are, our hero the Visionary—all alone at the helm of your business. You are frustrated, you are doing everything, and you're burning out. You're suffering from what we call the Five Frustrations:

1. **Lack of Control.** You started this business so you could have more control over your time, money, and freedom—your future. Once you reach a certain point of growth, however, you realize that somehow you actually have *less* control over these things than you've ever had before. The business is now controlling you!
2. **Lack of Profit.** Quite simply, you don't have enough. It's a frustrating feeling to look at the monthly P&L (or daily cash flow) and realize that no matter how hard you work, the numbers just don't add up.

3. **People.** Nobody (employees, partners, vendors) seems to understand you or do things your way. You're just not on the same page.
4. **Hitting the Ceiling.** Growth has stopped. The business is more complex, and you can't figure out exactly why it isn't working.
5. **Nothing Is Working.** You've tried several remedies, consulted books, and instituted quick fixes. None of these have worked for long. Your employees have become numb to new initiatives. Your wheels are spinning—and you have no traction.

To compound the difficulties, you are now bored with the repetition of day-to-day execution. Your company has outgrown the stage where force of will could solve almost any challenge. You feel like you're coaxing a cat to swim across a pond—it's just not a natural thing for a Visionary. It's time to seriously address the company's structure, people, and process. So now what?

THE SOLUTION: EMBRACE YOUR VISIONARY NATURE

Not all Visionary entrepreneurs are frustrated. Many have engineered significant growth, feel in control, have enviable profits, and employ people who work together as a team. Instead of the endless issues that cause the minor distractions so common to many companies, these Visionaries run businesses that are focused, consistent,

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and healthy. You can get everything you want from your business. If you are willing to do what it takes to be your best, there is hope.

If you are a Visionary, you must delegate the role of implementing your ideas in order to elevate yourself to your true talents. This will free up your energy and creativity to grow your company, protect your vision, wow your customers, protect your culture, and stay three steps ahead of everyone—including the competition.

At Uckele Health and Nutrition (UHN), Visionary Mike Uckele decided to hire an Integrator. This was six years after taking over ownership of the family business from his father and uncle. He had doubled the size of the company over that period, playing both roles. He knew he was not good at executing the details, but wanted to wait until he could afford to hire an executive. Four years ago he named Del Collins as Integrator, and UHN has grown 20% per year to \$23 million and 108 people. Del was promoted from within after two years of working for the company. Mike describes the results of the decision as “Very rewarding. It allows me to no longer burn the candle at both ends and worry about everything getting completed. I spend more time with family and friends, and focus solely on growing the business.” He describes his role as “the facilitator of creative ideas and relationship builder.”

As the old proverb so accurately notes, “Vision without execution is just hallucination.” In other words, you need someone to help you execute your vision. The idea isn’t enough: it must be implemented to have value. It’s your

choice. For those of you who are searching for answers, let's get to work.

Tens of thousands of Visionaries have been where you are now. Some have failed, but many have gone to the next level. They just didn't do it alone. You will now have to decide. Are you willing to delegate and elevate?

After all, Ray Kroc couldn't have done it without Fred Turner at McDonald's. Henry Ford couldn't have done it without James Couzens at Ford. Joel Pearlman couldn't have done it without Rob Dube at imageOne. John Pollock couldn't have done it without Paul Boyd at Financial Gravity.

Now you see the landscape for the Visionary. The powers and the pitfalls. All of these Visionaries stood where you are standing right now, and they made a choice. In the words of Randy Pruitt, Visionary of Randall Industries, one of the largest radiator manufacturing and distribution companies in North America, "If you are looking to grow your company, you can't do it without an Integrator. At some point you will have to relieve the weight carried on your shoulders and find someone to carry it with you."

The Visionary DNA

Common Roles	Common Traits	Common Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entrepreneurial "spark plug" • Inspirer • Passion provider • Developer of new/big ideas/breakthroughs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the founding entrepreneur • Have lots of ideas/idea creation/idea growth • Are strategic thinkers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inconsistency • Organizational "whiplash," the head turn • Dysfunctional team, a lack of openness and honesty

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The Visionary DNA (continued)

Common Roles	Common Traits	Common Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Big problem solver • Engager and maintainer of big external relationships • Closer of big deals • Learner, researcher, and discoverer • Company vision creator and champion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always see the big picture • Have a pulse on the industry and target market • Research and develop new products and services • Manage big external relationships (e.g., customer, vendor, industry) • Get involved with customers and employees when Visionary is needed • Inspire people • Are creative problem solvers (big problems) • Create the company vision and protect it • Sell and close big deals • Connect the dots • On occasion do the work, provide the service, make the product 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of clear direction/under-communication • Reluctance to let go • Underdeveloped leaders and managers • “Genius with a thousand helpers” • Ego and feelings of value dependent on being needed by others • Eyes (appetite) bigger than stomach; 100 pounds in a 50-pound bag • Resistance to following standardized processes • Quickly and easily bored • No patience for the details • Amplification of complexity and chaos • ADD (typical; not always) • All foot on gas pedal—with no brake • Drive is too hard for most people

Before we discuss the Integrator role, please take the assessment below to see if you are truly a Visionary. Also consider having your Leadership Team complete it on your behalf. The Visionary Indicator Assessment is also available online at www.rocketfuelnow.com.

VISIONARY INDICATOR ASSESSMENT	
For each statement below, rank yourself on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 rarely describes you and 5 almost always describes you:	
1	I have an affinity for tackling and creatively solving the biggest, most complex problems.
2	I am constantly generating new ideas. I never run out.
3	I am a great leader. People tend to follow me.
4	I am highly optimistic in my outlook.
5	My natural perspective is oriented toward things that are external to the company, big-picture or futuristic thinking.
6	I am the creator of, and champion for, the company Vision.
7	I sometimes find it difficult to translate my Vision into something that others understand. They don't seem to get it.

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|----|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8 | I eventually have the “right” idea, and know it. It may come from having a large volume of different ideas or a small number that I feel strongly about. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9 | I have zero patience for putting operational policy, structure, and repeatability systems in place. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10 | I naturally think about the future of the industry, our product or our service, what’s coming, and how we can best position the company to take advantage of it. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11 | I am naturally insightful, skilled at deductive reasoning, and highly innovative in thinking of ways to make ideas bigger and better. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12 | I don’t like being held accountable or being told what to do. I find it challenging to establish genuine accountability in my company. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13 | I embrace and enjoy the role of being the engine for big, new, breakthrough ideas, the spark, getting them started. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14 | I embrace and enjoy the role of solving the biggest problems faced by the company. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15 | I embrace and enjoy the role of being responsible for a few large, key, strategic relationships (vendor, client, banking, industry). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

(Continued on next page)

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16	I embrace and enjoy the role of selling and closing big deals.	1	2	3	4	5
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17	I struggle with follow-through. I lose interest in finishing new ideas. I don't have patience or interest for a lot of detail. I wish people would get to the point. I get bored and distracted very easily.	1	2	3	4	5
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18	I embrace and enjoy the role of being the "entrepreneurial spark plug," providing passion and inspiration.	1	2	3	4	5
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19	I embrace and enjoy the role of researching and developing new products and services.	1	2	3	4	5
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20	I embrace and enjoy the role of leading the way on learning and discovery that advances the organization.	1	2	3	4	5
----	---	---	---	---	---	---

COUNT: Total number of each ranking

x1 x2 x3 x4 x5

TOTAL: Multiply by number above

Add all five numbers from the TOTAL line above to determine your **Visionary Indicator Score:** _____ (A VIS of 80 or more is considered strong.)

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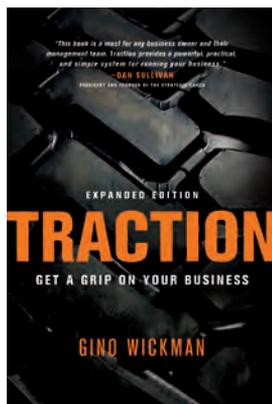
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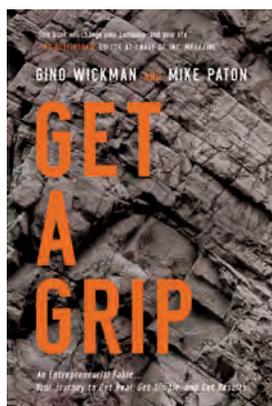


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