Key Factors for Success

The key factors for success are:

1. **Strong leadership** providing support and crafting a compelling vision that agents and managers, both need and find attracting. Within this the needs are:
    A. A strong management team.
    B. Properly and well incentivized management, focusing on recruiting and creating a quality environment enabling and encouraging the recruiting process.
    C. A well run administration, providing excellent agent support and stability. In addition it must include the internal budgetary systems and cost controls necessary to become profitable; while understanding the balancing act going on between agents and management.

2. **A powerful, attracting vision** that is clear, well articulated and will motivate a team through the growth periods ahead. This is particularly essential in influencing the outcomes of:
    A. Recruiting
    B. Retention of good agents recruited; which in turn translates into more agent recruiting.
    C. Marketing and Advertising. This should be targeted at agent recruiting and communicating the culture of attraction that would make the de novo enterprise work.

3. **A strong recruiting program**. Recruiting is tedious, long term and sometimes hard work. These only work when there is a clear plan, a commitment at the top and accountability as a system. But, this must be tempered with encouragement, lots of hands on support and a winning environment.

4. **Strategically, well planned, powerful locations in the right areas**. Done properly this is a major asset or liability to the work of recruiting. This requires:
    A. Market research
    B. Understanding which offices are targets

Strong Leadership and a Powerful Attracting Vision

Blueprint for Peak Performance

Everybody understands at the start that we face a major task of bringing this project into being and that it will take more than a few months. It's important to keep the vision of this project in front of us as we work out the day-to-day problems.

The Leadership Factor

In fact, the vision of what the company can become needs to be transmitted—almost by osmosis—throughout the organization, and a strong sense of mission developed within the company. In effect, the company culture must develop, as new stories and anecdotes are shared continually to confirm the vision.

That's why the role of the leader is so crucial to continual success. Leadership deals with direction—with making sure that the ladder is leaning against the right wall. Management deals with speed. To double one's speed in the wrong direction, however, is the very definition of foolishness. Leadership deals with vision—with keeping the mission in sight—and with effectiveness and results. The leadership factor builds a strong management team around the vision.

1. The **Leader insists on Excellence**. An unyielding commitment to a vision and to one's own high standards of excellence and accomplishment is obvious. "Excellent" is not, to a peak performer, a synonym for "perfect." Top achievers do not allow themselves to be undermined by the paralysis of perfectionisms. Rather, they value action tempered by information. Their procedures are best summarized as "Research it, try it, correct it." They recognize that perfection is an illusion, and aim instead toward ever-increasing levels of excellence. In the process, they frequently reach the heights that intimidate many of their peers.

2. **Organize Around Results**. A strong leadership team focuses on producing results, not on being busy. They may be busy, and for them that is not the point; the point is to work smarter, not harder. They focus on the tasks that present real opportunities for payoff; that includes looking for leverage points which magnify

small changes into large improvements. Their ability to consistently produce results of service to themselves and others often comes from an ability to work with forces rather than against them, while always keeping a guiding vision in view. They distinguish between short-term gain and long-range benefit by exercising foresight and effective strategic planning.

3. Leaders, then, **manage attention** through a compelling vision that brings others to a place they have not been before.

4. So, the **first leadership competency** is the management of attention through a set of intentions or a vision, not in a mystical or religious sense, but in the sense of outcome, goal, or direction.

5. **Management of Meaning** To make dreams apparent to others, and to align people with them, leaders must communicate their vision. Communication and alignment work together. Leaders make ideas tangible and real to others, so they can support them. No matter how marvelous the vision, the effective leader must use a metaphor, a word, or a model to make that vision clear to others.

The key word is "leadership." Leaders have a vision of the future of their organization and constantly sell that vision to their team. There are two major tasks to be accomplished during planning: first, to define the vision of the future; second, to plan the details of managing the change (the theme of this business plan.)

The senior managers must be excited about "their" vision of the future of their organization. They must be able to talk it up in language that is consistent. It is their leadership that must mobilize the energies of the organization to work towards that vision. This is senior management leadership responsibility. Leaders, then, manage attention through a compelling vision that brings others to a place they have not been before.

The Management Factor

Management deals with establishing structure and systems to get those results. It focuses on efficiency, cost-benefit analyses, logistics, methods, procedures, and policies.

1. Leadership focuses on the top line. Management focuses on the bottom line. Leadership derives its power from values and correct principles. Management organizes resources to serve selected objectives to produce the bottom line.

2. Of course, management and leadership are not mutually exclusive; in fact, it might be said that leadership is the highest component of management. And leadership, itself, can be broken into two parts: one having to do with vision and direction, values and purposes, and the other with inspiring and motivating people to work together with a common vision and purpose. Some leaders have vision but lack team-building talents. Other leaders can inspire people and build teams but lack vision.

3. People who are excellent managers but poor leaders may be extremely well organized and run a tight ship with superior systems and procedures and detailed job descriptions. But unless they are internally motivated, little gets done because there is no feeling, no heart; everything is too mechanical, too formal, too tight, too protective. Truly significant accomplishments may result simply because people share a common vision, purpose, or sense of mission.

Accordingly, my dictum is this (a two handed approach): lead from the right, manage from the left.

This "mentor" model requires managers to develop people while getting the job done. The manager builds a team that shares responsibility for results, continuously develops individual skills, and articulates an over-arching goal, standard, or vision for uniting and inspiring people.

Managers must see themselves as the kind of person who can fulfill that vision…who can do what needs to be done. A lot of managers are running their organizations on memory, not on vision and insight. They look more to the past than to the future, and yet, we're in a period of fundamental change.

The Vision Factor

Vision: Peak performers have a very clear picture of where they are and where they want to go. They not only see themselves at the pinnacle of success but also at every plateau along the way. They imagine in detail what it will be like when they complete their mission.

1. They keep in touch with a **compelling and energizing mission**—one that is characterized by intention and delight, by specific goals that require them to stretch beyond their comfort zones, by clear and accurate feedback, by valued rewards, and by necessary support in the form of people, materials, and services.

2. **Vision:** Creating the Future. Leaders who develop clear vision can mentally journey from the known to the unknown, creating the future from a montage of facts, figures, hopes, dreams, dangers and opportunities. By applying the art of meditation to organizational introspection, you gain a deep understanding of business and its environment.

One of the traits most apparent in leaders is their ability to draw others to them, not because they have a vision, a dream, a set of intentions, an agenda, a frame of reference. *They communicate an extraordinary focus of commitment* which attracts people to them. An individual with vision makes people want to join him; he enrolls them in his vision.

The Shared Values Factor

Vision needs to be shared by employees. High performance executives obsessively communicate their vision to be certain that their employees understand it.

1. Vision needs to be *communicated* at orientation (probably taught by Doug Yeaman). Leaders of the high performing companies, communicate their vision in their daily actions. The best testament is the living testament!

2. High-performing executives make certain that there's an *alignment between their vision and the individual employee's desires.* During the selection process, the question to be frequently asked, "What do you really want, and how can we help you get it?" During the initial training period, people are constantly being helped to see the relationship between the company values and vision and their own desires.

3. **Alignment** of individual and organizational objectives occurs as the natural outgrowth of people seeing, for themselves, that their desires are best served by their consistent excellent execution of the organization's tasks. The powerful motivation of alignment happens when individuals voluntarily adopt in the company's vision and mission, because it's in their self-interest to do so.

4. Leaders of innovation *persist in an idea, keep at it*. One major difference between change projects that succeed and those that fail *is simply time— staying with it long enough to make it work*

Shared values are an immense motivational force. I agree with Helen Keller who said, in essence, that one of the greatest motivators is recognizing that yours is a mighty cause.

It's not the blind leading the blind—you share vision, insight, and direction.

There are eight "primary values" for this new corporate culture. I have a passionate belief that unless these eight elements are woven into the fabric of a company, its culture will eventually fray and unravel.

The eight principles for developing a tightly knit corporate culture are:

1. **Purpose.** The role of the leader is to communicate vision and commitment to some higher purpose. People will perform at higher levels if their work contributes to their self-worth.

2. **Unity.** In effective organizations, employees "own" their work. "The distinctions between owners and employees, thinkers and doers, salary and wage earners and other hierarchal expressions represent thinking of the past."

3. **Consensus**. Thinking is the fundamental activity of today's worker. This organization will succeed by stimulating people to think creatively and to risk sharing thoughts and feelings.

4. **Excellence.** Excellence will be achieved by promoting creative dissatisfaction and by accountability to do better continually.

5. **Performance.** When rewards are granted without regard to performance, productivity suffers. Rewards must be granted according to the value of the performance."

6. **Empiricism.** We will endorse the methods of statistical quality control at all levels of operation. If people are too concerned with quantity, they will likely manage by the wrong numbers.

7. **Intimacy.** The new challenge is to tap the inner thoughts, emotions and spiritual energies of individuals. Managers must know their people more intimately; however, intimacy requires a strength and security seldom found in corporate cultures.

8. **Integrity**. At a time, when what is legal is confused with what is moral, we will stress that managers must be "honest in spirit." Only then can they develop trust, the glue holding organizations and societies together.

Summary

Executives of consistently high-performing companies **craft a vision** which generally includes four components: overall purposes (including human/social and business/economic), strategies, core values, and specific alignment-creating actions. This vision blends an appeal to deep values with the realities of running a successful commercial enterprise. Executives of high-performing companies follow these four steps in crafting, spreading, and implanting their vision.