


The Work of Leaders

 How Vision, Alignment,
and Execution Will Change
the Way You Lead

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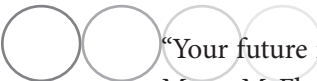
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Foreword



“Your future is whatever you make it,” Doc Brown said to Marty McFly, “so make it a good one.”

These words from *Back to the Future* drive to the heart of our work over the last twenty years—equipping leaders and teams with tools and techniques to envision their ideal future and innovate to get there. That is why we are pleased to introduce you to *The Work of Leaders*, a compelling read on the nuts and bolts of what visionary leaders actually do. Written in a crisp and engaging style by our esteemed colleagues at Inscape Publishing, this book does something rare in business literature: it deconstructs the “how to,” serving as a handy Do-It-Yourself manual for leaders at all levels. Using a simple yet robust vision-alignment-execution framework,

The Work of Leaders unbundles the knowledge and skills used by the very best leaders.

We've seen it in action. Our work in fields as varied as consumer goods, financial services, education and mission-based NGOs has convinced us that creating a shared vision—what we call the “flawless future”—is the first and only place to start. Time and again, leaders and teams with whom we consult report on breakthroughs that happen when the flawless future is articulated; it liberates teams to close the gap between today's reality and tomorrow's promise. Vision first. It works.

But vision alone will not win the day. We've seen the eye rolling and flavor-of-the-month fizzle around visions that are vague, stuck at the top, or not linked and synched across teams. In stark contrast, we've experienced the power and traction of compelling visions that are widely owned and personally felt by all who are working to make it happen. Building alignment and championing execution pay off. Teams jazzed up by their shared picture of future success take risks. They innovate. They troubleshoot problems. They know how their contributions matter. They deliver results and reflect on what was learned along the way.

Good news. Each of us has a unique mix of vision-alignment-execution strengths that come naturally. But none of us does it all without working at it. Bold thinkers may gloss over the need for team dialogue. Astute planners may drive to closure too soon. All of us can use this book and Inscape's excellent companion *Work of Leaders* personal assessment profile to sharpen our self-awareness and expand our range of techniques. A good antidote to the dangerous blind spots even the best leaders can develop over time.

This is not theoretical for us. We've field tested these frameworks and tools in our consulting work, and used them in our own leadership roles on project teams and non-profit boards. And we keep learning.

Where are your biggest leadership breakthroughs and toughest challenges? Read on, try something new and be in touch—we'd love to hear from you.

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