



START WITH THE END IN MIND, OR PAY THE PRICE

"If you don't know where you are going, every road will get you nowhere"

This famous quote from Henry Kissinger is very true when it comes to managing and accelerating the sector transitions we are in.

If we wish to solve the big sustainability challenges of our time we must accelerate and steer the sector transitions we are in. For this we believe, we must have vision of where we want to end up and start with that end in mind.

A vision is NOT the same as having goals or targets. Stating that we must move towards 50% circularity by 2030 will inform everyone about the ambition, but it does nothing to help shape and catalyse the inspiration, energy, forces and investments that are necessary to drive the Circularity transitions.

In fact, it will often do the opposite. It will allow for everyone to start seeing the necessary change as a cost, rather than a desired destination. It will divide groups around different solutions based on current interests and therefore we will not be "rowing in the same direction", rather than unite us in the future opportunities. There will no ownership of the goal and as a result people will wait and look to others to move first and pick up the bill. It does not help in identifying the willing and able, in fact it invites deniers and laggards to the table and tirelessly explain why it can't be done and why above all we must be 'realistic'.

In short, this is simply bad practice. And we already know this from 40 years of academic literature and research in change management.

A vision is critical and a good vision meets the following five characteristics:

- It inspires: It paints a picture of a desirable future where we not only have solved the problem, but we meet our desired values and there are also economic opportunities and improvement of wellbeing.
- It forces tough decisions: It answers the question what needs to be done and therefore what main solutions we need to scale, and what practices we must scale out. With that, a good vision speaks both to the rational mind as well as the heart and gut and forces real decision to be taken.
- It unites: A good vision will help in making it clear who believes in this direction and who not. A good success condition for change is to always work with the willing and able. Not with the opponents and the nay sayers.



- What's next: A good vision leads to concrete action now. What can we do now that will move us closer to where we want to go. And it will help to course correct over time as we learn and as the world changes around us.
- It can change over time: during the transition process the vision itself can be improved upon and therefore it continues to be a inspiring guide.

For more than 20 years it was considered unrealistic and undesirable to have a vision as we have led ourselves to believe that we can't predict nor shape our own future. We believed that we are all powerless in the face of bigger market, geopolitical and technological forces. That somehow markets know best and the best we can do is support with subsidy money to remain innovative and relevant.

My urgent call to action to everyone working towards sustainable economies and markets is to dare ask the question, what will the future of our economy and sector look like. What do we want more off and what do we need to scale out. Before we continue our talks on how to meet the targets. I promise you, this is what will reveal and explain 80% of your struggles.

Lucas Simons

Founder NewForesight and TransMission Institute

Lucas Simons



lucas.simons@newforesight.com

About NewForesight: NewForesight is an internationally recognized strategic consultancy with a mission to accelerate the transition to a sustainable economy. We help our clients solve complex challenges and turn them into market opportunities that drive both business objectives and sustainable growth. Discover how we can help your organization become future-proof at www.newforesight.com.

About TransMission: Rooted in interdisciplinary academic research, the TransMission framework provides an action-oriented roadmap to guide stakeholders through systemic change and market transformation. Our approach engages businesses, governments, multilaterals, multi-stakeholder platforms, financial institutions, NGOs, and academic partners to collaboratively drive the transformation needed for long-term sustainability goals. Read [here](#) how TransMission can help your organization can become a competent leader in the transition.