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# A Study Of A Shared Vision At A Travel Agency

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*Many authors on the subject of Strategic Management place great emphasis on the importance of visions and missions. Some state that the foremost direction-setting question senior managers need to ask is: "What is our vision for our organisation – what are we trying to do and become?" Others state that it is a key indicator of how an organisation views the claims of its stakeholders. Although it is clear that they consider corporate strategy as an integral part of the success of the organisation, the implementation of strategic vision is sadly lacking or not supported by everyone in many organisations. This paper explored the extent to which Flight Centre Limited S.A.'s vision is shared. The findings of this study, which followed a quantitative methodology, indicate that the organisation circumscribes to a vision and that the vision is generally shared by employees contributing to the astounding success of the organisation in South Africa.*

## Introduction and Background

Organisations all over the world are faced with the immense pressure of competition. The challenge lies in managing all the business activities and processes in such a way that the objectives and goals of the business can be reached. Theodore Levitt said: "If you do not know where you're going, any road will take you there." (Cronjé et al., 2000:123). To avoid this lack of purpose from having a negative effect on organisations, top managers all over the world spend hours compiling medium and long-term visions, objectives and goals for their organisations.

Vision plays a very important role in stipulating where the organisation is headed. It focuses on a specific position in the future and one cannot ignore the effect that environmental change could have on the vision of the organisation. The organisation needs to determine what it wants to become at an uncertain point in the future.

Expectations created by vision and mission statements on individuals visiting organisations are often not realised. Consumers often find that the key values and the overall direction expressed by such statements are not shared or supported by the employees with whom they come into contact. In many cases it seems as if the employee is unaware of the personal contribution he or she could make towards realising the vision of the organisation.

In order to determine the extent of commitment of employees to the strategic visions in a broad spectrum of organisations in South Africa, one would have to include sources and samples from different sectors and industries. This, however, could prove to be a daunting task. For that reason, this paper will focus on one organisation, Flight Centre Limited (South Africa). Flight Centre Limited South Africa is a division of Australia and New Zealand's largest retail travel group, Flight Centre Limited, a listed company on the Australian Stock Exchange since 1995. Since opening its first store in Sydney (Australia) in 1981, Flight Centre Limited has grown to become one of the world's largest independent travel retailers. The organisation now operates more than 1000 stores throughout the world in Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Canada and Hong Kong, and employs more than 4500 people worldwide.

Being a global company, Flight Centre Limited is able to negotiate airfares on a global basis. With their bulk buying power they negotiate better airfare transactions than other travel retailers and in return they offer consumers the advantage of these negotiated discounts. As part of their Price Beat commitment Flight Centre Limited guarantees to better any genuine current quoted airfare. The South African-based stores are located in Johannesburg, Pretoria, Durban, Richards Bay, Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, East London and Bloemfontein. Their commitment and

promise of "Price Beat Guarantee" gives them the leading edge over their competitors and they undertake never to be under-quoted on any fare, to any destination at any time. Their vision is: "Destined to Dominate".

The importance of vision and mission statements is well documented. An increasing number of authors argue that strategies in an organisation have a major impact on its performance relative to its peers (Hill & Jones, 2001:4; Thompson & Strickland, 1996:2). Raric and Vitton found that organisations with a formalised mission statement have double the average return on shareholders' equity than those organisations without formalised mission statements. Bart and Baetz found a positive relationship between mission statements and organisational performance. Business Week reports that organisations using mission statements have a 30 percent higher return on certain financial measures than those without such statements. However, the extent of manager and employee involvement in developing vision and mission statements can make a difference in business success (David, 2001:57).

As the overriding goal in the majority of organisations is to achieve superior performance relative to their peers (Hill & Jones, 2001:4), this paper will be very relevant with regards to understanding the importance of strategic vision and the commitment of employees throughout the organisation, to such a vision.

## **Research Methodology**

Many problems arise regarding strategic vision. These include lack of understanding of the importance of vision and missions in organisations; lack of awareness of strategic vision at different levels in the organisation and a lack of shared vision resulting from 'top-down' visions. Another common problem is the lack of validity of visions when top management merely sets a vision to discharge their visionary duties. Statements are often compiled that merely reflect where the business is at a specific time without formulating a vision for future growth and development. This often leads to a lack of unanimity of purpose within organisations.

## **Objectives of the Study**

The primary objective of this study was to determine the extent to which Flight Centre Limited (South Africa)'s vision is shared.

The secondary objectives of the study were to understand the theoretical meaning of concepts: vision, mission and shared vision; to determine the perceptions employees of Flight Centre Limited (South Africa) have of the vision and to determine the extent of the employees' commitment to the strategic vision in Flight Centre Limited (South Africa).

To achieve the above-mentioned objectives the following empirical quantitative research objectives were pursued:

- To develop a questionnaire to be used as a data collection instrument.
- To employ the data collection instrument in a survey done at all staff employed at Flight Centre South Africa.
- To analyse and interpret the collected data in order to establish respondents' perceptions and to provide input to Flight Centre South Africa's Top Management.

## **Data Collection**

The research methodology was quantitative in nature. The study commenced with an extensive literature study to emphasise the purpose and nature of strategic visions in organisations. Quantitative research followed to determine the extent to which Flight Centre Limited (South Africa)'s vision, "Destined To Dominate", is shared and also to describe the reasons for commitment or lack of commitment by employees to the vision.

Quantitative research generally involves the collection of primary data from large numbers of individuals, with the intention of projecting the results to a wider population (Martins et al, 1996:125). In this study it was used to determine the perceptions employees have of the vision of the organisation. This was done by issuing structured questionnaires, using a Likert scale, to employees in Flight Centre Limited (South Africa). From this a comparative conclusion over the

broad spectrum of the Flight Centre Limited (South Africa) organisation was compiled by the author.

The survey questionnaire used in this study consisted of three sections with a total of 41 questions. The purpose of section A was to gather the following demographic information of the respondents:

1. Division employed
2. Position
3. Gender
4. Age
5. Qualification
6. Period employed at Flight Centre Limited (South Africa)
7. Period employed in the industry

Section B determined the respondents' perception of a vision statement and Section C consisted of specific research questions concerning the Vision of Flight Centre Limited. The questions were designed to determine if the organisation had a vision and to determine how well the vision was formulated – based on the requirements of a good vision.

Section D consisted of specific research questions concerning shared vision in Flight Centre Limited (South Africa). The questions were designed to determine to what extent employees are aware of and support the vision.

The questionnaire was distributed electronically to 350 Flight Centre Limited (South Africa) employees. The respondents could complete the questionnaires in their own time, and return them electronically to the researcher. By handling questionnaires in this manner much time is normally saved and the response rate is raised because of the fact that the respondents were not disturbed at an inconvenient time (De Vos, et al., 2002: 174). Of the 350 questionnaires distributed, 229 staff members responded by returning the completed questionnaire electronically, which indicates a response rate of 65%. A response rate of 50% is considered as adequate, 60% as good and 70% as excellent (De Vos, et al., 2002:172). Thus, the 65% response rate for this study is deemed good.

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's test of sphericity was used to determine the appropriateness of factor analysis. A first order factor analysis for Section C yielded two factors with an Eigenvalue higher than 1.0. However because of high cross loadings in the factor matrix lack of a distinct break in Eigenvalues it was decided to use only one factor in Section C - The respondents' perception of the vision of Flight Centre Limited.

**Table 1 The Total Variance Explained - Section C**

Factor	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	6.188	51.565	51.565	5.746	47.884	47.884	3.840	31.999	31.999
2	1.208	10.069	61.634	.720	6.003	53.887	2.626	21.887	53.887

The first order factor analysis for Section D yielded four factors with an Eigenvalue higher than 1.0. A second order factor analysis yielded only one factor with an Eigenvalue higher than 1.0, and it was also decided to use only one factor in Section D - The extent to which the vision of Flight Centre Limited is shared.

**Table 2 The Total Variance Explained – Section D**

Factor	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	9.108	47.937	47.937	8.746	46.031	46.031	2.879	15.155	15.155
2	1.412	7.430	55.367	1.116	5.872	51.903	2.862	15.064	30.219
3	1.171	6.162	61.529	.696	3.661	55.564	2.803	14.754	44.973
4	1.031	5.428	66.957	.555	2.920	58.484	2.567	13.511	58.484

A t-test for Equality of Means was done on the two factors. When the p-value is smaller than 0.05 the researcher could conclude that the two factors are significantly different in their means. None of the p-values were smaller than 0.05 (Annexure D). This means that there was no discriminative feeling amongst the different Flight Centre employees regardless of position employed, gender, age, qualification, period employed at Flight Centre and period employed in the industry. The employees were all in agreement regarding their perceptions of the organisation's vision.

The Cronbach alpha coefficient and inter-item correlation coefficients was used to assess the internal consistency of the measuring instrument. The coefficient alpha reflected important information about the proportion of error variance contained in a scale. Owing to the multiplicity of the items measuring the factors, the Cronbach alpha coefficient is considered to be the most suitable coefficient for use in this study, since it has the most utility of multi-item scales at the internal level of measurement. Cronbach alpha is used to estimate the proportion of variance that is systematic or consistent in a set of test scores; this can range from 0.00 (if no variance is consistent) to 1.00 if all variance is consistent. A value of 0.6 or less indicates unsatisfactory internal consistency reliability. An important property of coefficient alpha is that its value tends to increase with an increase in the number of scale items (Malhotra, 1999:282).

According to Garson (2006) Cronbach's alpha is the most common form of internal consistency reliability coefficient. By convention, a lenient cut-off of 0.60 is common in exploratory research; alpha should be at least 0.70 or higher to retain an item in an adequate scale; and many researchers require a cut-off of 0.80 for a good scale.

The reliability study for Section C showed that only one factor was usable from the Factor Analysis. This factor shows a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.904. This is higher than 0.70 and can therefore be considered to be reliable.

After the second order Factor Analysis only one factor was used for Section D. This factor shows a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.927. This is higher than 0.70 and can therefore be considered to be reliable.

## Research Findings

### Do employees understand what a vision is?

Section B of the questionnaire was aimed at determining the respondents' perception of a vision statement. Three questions were included in Section B. The aim of the questions was to determine if the respondents knew what the difference between a vision and a mission is and what the Flight Centre Limited (South Africa) vision is.

The first question was aimed at determining how many respondents know that a vision indicates what the organisation wants to achieve at some future date. Only 0.9% of the respondents were unsure of what a vision is. 39.3% of the respondents agreed that a vision statement indicates what the organisation wants to achieve and 57.6% of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement. None of the respondents disagreed. 2.2% of the respondents did not answer this question and are indicated as missing system.

Table 3 indicates how many respondents know that a vision indicates what the organisation wants to achieve at some future date. A five point Likert intensity scale was chosen as the scale design for Section B.

**Table 3 Perception of Vision**

	Number of employees	%
Strongly agree	132	57.6
Agree	90	39.3
Unsure	2	0.9
Disagree	0	0
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Total	224	97.8
Missing System	5	2.2
Total	229	100

The second question was aimed at determining how many respondents know that a mission indicates how the organisation will achieve its vision. More respondents were unsure about or disagreed with the statement, however the percentage negative responses was still very low with 0% strongly disagreeing, 2.6% disagreeing and 2.2% being unsure. 2.2% of the respondents did not answer this question and are indicated as missing system.

Table 4 indicates how many respondents know that a mission indicates how the organisation will achieve its vision.

**Table 4 Perception of Mission**

	Number of employees	%
Strongly agree	122	53.3
Agree	91	39.7
Unsure	5	2.2
Disagree	6	2.6
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Total	224	97.8
Missing System	5	2.2
Total	229	100

The third question was aimed at determining how many respondents know what Flight Centre Limited (South Africa)'s vision is. The majority (62.9%) of respondents knew that Flight Centre Limited (South Africa)'s vision statement is "Destined to Dominate". The second highest response (13.1%) was "To be the Leading Travel Consultants in South Africa". 10.9% of the respondents indicated that the vision was "To be the Travel Agency of Choice", 9.6% of the respondents indicated the vision to be "Leading the Way" and only 1.3% of the respondents indicated that they did not know what the vision is. 2.2% of the respondents did not answer this question and are indicated as missing system.

Table 5 indicates how many respondents know what Flight Centre Limited (South Africa)'s vision is.

**Table 5 Knowledge of Flight Centre Limited (South Africa)'s vision**

	Number of employees	%
Destined to Dominate	144	62.9
Travel Agency of Choice	25	10.9
Leading the Way	22	9.6
To be the Leading Travel Consultants in South Africa	30	13.1
I don't know	3	1.3
Total	224	97.8
Missing System	5	2.2
Total	229	100

The majority of the respondents agreed that a vision statement indicates what the organisation wants to achieve and that the mission indicates how the organisation will achieve its vision. In Section C of the questionnaire a question was asked to test this and the majority of the respondents said that a vision sets the organisation apart from others in the industry, which is inconsistent with the findings of Section B.

### **Does Flight Centre Limited (South Africa) have a vision?**

In Section B, question 10 the respondents were asked to identify Flight Centre Limited (South Africa)'s vision statement. 62.9% of the respondents knew that Flight Centre Limited (South Africa)'s vision statement is 'Destined to Dominate'.

### **To what extent do the employees use the Flight Centre Limited (South Africa) vision statement?**

Section C set out to explore the employee's understanding and perception of Flight Centre's vision statement. A number of questions was placed in this section to determine if the respondents could use the Flight Centre Limited (South Africa) vision as a guide to strategy and action to be internalised by those needed to turn the vision into reality. The majority of respondents agreed when they read the Flight Centre vision, they know what the organisation wants to achieve and it guides their actions to turn the vision into a reality. They perceive the Flight Centre Limited (South Africa) vision to be helpful when making work-related decisions and also find the vision to be inspirational to them.

## **Is the Flight Centre Limited (South Africa) vision statement properly developed?**

A vision statement should adhere to a number of requirements. Section C also included a number of questions based on these requirements to determine how well the Flight Centre Limited (South Africa) vision statement was developed.

Vision statements should be future based. The majority of the respondents agreed that Flight Centre Limited's vision statement is future based. They should also be well articulated and easily understood by all, making it a guide to strategy and action to be internalised by those needed to turn the vision into reality. The majority of respondents agreed that Flight Centre Limited (South Africa)'s vision is an easily understandable statement.

A good vision statement should fit in with the organisation's history, culture and values and should be consistent with the organisation's current situation. The majority of the respondents agreed that Flight Centre Limited (South Africa)'s vision is in line with the culture of the organisation.

Another requirement is that a vision statement should provide a realistic and informed assessment of what is attainable in the future. It should also be simple, motivating, realistic and should involve stretch. Hill and Jones (2001:49) state that managers should make sure that the vision does not become so grandiose that it cannot be realised and thus loses credibility among employees. The majority of the respondents perceived the Flight Centre Limited (South Africa) vision to be attainable.

Vision statements should represent the stakeholders of the organisation and they should see themselves or their interests represented in the vision. The majority of the respondents perceived their interests to be represented in the vision.

Lastly vision statements should be a concise word picture of what an organisation aspires to be in the future and provide a clear sense of direction that everyone in the organisation can understand and act upon at present. According to Lewis (1997:10) a vision statement should present a clear picture of where everyone agrees the organisation is going and how it intends to get there. This will prevent the different parties involved from going into different directions. From the questionnaire it is evident that a large percentage of employees implied that employees had different ideas of what the vision statement meant.

## **Do employees share the vision set?**

For a vision to be shared, it should adhere to a number of requirements. Section D aimed to determine whether the Flight Centre employees shared the Flight Centre Limited (South Africa) vision. Vision has little meaning unless it can be successfully communicated to those working in the organisation, since these are the people who have to realise it (Lynch, 2000:444). The majority of the respondents perceived the vision to be formally communicated to all levels of the organisation.

The establishment of shared vision should not be done unilaterally by top management. It is a definite process that needs to be initiated and facilitated by top management, and needs the commitment of all stakeholders concerned. The majority of the respondents said that discussions were undertaken at all levels of the organisation before establishing its vision, however, they also stated that Flight Centre Limited's vision was formulated by top management.

A shared vision can create a common identity among enormously diverse people and it connects people to an important undertaking and gives them and the organisation something for which to take a stand. Employees become connected by a common aspiration and purpose. The questions asked in Section D aimed to determine if the Flight Centre Limited (South Africa) employees had a common identity striving towards a common goal. A vast majority of the respondents found the vision to guide Flight Centre employees to achieve a common goal.

Senge (1990:207-208) states that once the vision is achieved, it can easily migrate into a defensive posture of "protecting what we have". An intrinsic shared vision uplifts people's aspirations, where work becomes part of pursuing a larger purpose embodied in the organisation's products and services. This will change the employees' relationship with the organisation. It is no longer a case of "their organisation". It now becomes "our organisation"

(Senge, 1990:207-208). A vast majority of the respondents agreed that Flight Centre Limited's vision statement is a true expression of their own aspirations, making it an intrinsic shared vision.

For a vision to truly be a force in people's hearts, it must be shared. Dennis Connor states that once a person's direction becomes clear to him/her and fully visible to others, all the elements of winning – attitude, performance, teamwork and competition – begin to merge (Thompson & Strickland, 1996:22). Vision works by posing a collective challenge, aligning people's efforts so that they self-organise without needing to be controlled, and generating a group spirit in which people acknowledge and appreciate one another's contributions in moving toward the vision. The majority of the respondents felt that there was a strong sense of group spirit and that they appreciated one another's contributions.

According to C. Patrick Lewis (1997:9) it is important for an organisation's vision to inspire enthusiasm and excitement in people when they come to work. That is what distinguishes shared vision from mission, strategy, and values. The majority of the Flight Centre Limited employees stated that they were excited to be part of the organisation.

A shared vision enables employees to identify their own roles in the organisation and the society at large. Lewis (1997:16) states that a shared vision provides a context within which workers at all levels can make decisions, because the activities reflect what the organisation wants to create. The majority of the respondents stated that they understood their individual roles in the organisation.

## **Managerial Implications and Recommendations**

This study set out to determine whether Flight Centre Limited (South Africa) has a vision and to what extent the vision is shared. From the study it is evident that the organisation has a vision: "Destined to Dominate".

A vision should require the organisation to make a leap into a future that does not necessarily link with the present situation in which the organisation finds itself. The compilers of the vision should also take care that the vision is not too narrow in definition as this could seriously hamper operations by committing the organisation simply to a small segment of the market. The vision "Destined to Dominate" is both future based and broad, as it implies that Flight Centre Limited (South Africa) could dominate the market in many different areas.

Collins and Porras (1996) propose a model of a visionary organisation. Flight Centre Limited (South Africa) meets a number of the requirements set by them. According to them the organisation should build a vision and an organisation that can prosper far beyond the presence of any single leader and through multiple life cycles, which is described as "clock building". For Flight Centre Limited's future growth and prosperity, it clearly defines and lives by its purpose. The organisation strives to establish a robust and independent culture in order to outlive its current and future leaders (Flight Centre A. 2005). From studying the organisation, the author became aware of the fast altering nature of the organisation. Despite this, it still keeps progressing steadily towards becoming a dominating force in the market.

Collins and Porras (1996) also state that visionary organisations are characterised by strong drives for exploration and discovery, for creativity and innovation, for improvement and for change. Flight Centre Limited is a ground breaker introducing unique services to the market. Visionary organisations also expect high levels of commitment; those who cannot accept the prevailing culture will leave or be dismissed. According to Morgan (1997:668) visionary organisations tend to be more demanding of their employees and managers than other organisations. But those who can cope may develop a strong sense of working for an elite organisation, which in turn has an effect on the calibre of people who can be attracted and recruited. Visionary organisations may be regarded as ultimate employers who are in a position to recruit "the best". The Flight Centre Limited (South Africa) Group has been voted the 4th Best Company To Work For in South Africa - 1st place in Travel, Tourism and Leisure sector in 2004 and 7th Best Company To Work For in South Africa in 2005 (Deloitte & Touche, Human Capital Corporation Survey).

The vision statement should inspire the stakeholders of the organisation. It should be consistent the organisation's core values, realistic and credible, well articulated and easily



understood. Section C of the questionnaire tested these; the responses were overwhelmingly positive.

A vision statement should be a brief statement, written in terms of what the organisation believes their customers require of them to become. It should be written in terms of what the organisation will work towards becoming over the long range and in a broader sense, rather than what they will look like in a month or a year in a specific sense. The Flight Centre Limited (South Africa) vision "Destined to Dominate" adheres to all of the mentioned prerequisites.

The response to one of the questions posed in Section C indicated that there could be some confusion regarding the role of a vision as apposed to the role of a mission. Management could attempt to define the difference more lucidly by emphasising that vision is a desired future state indicating what the organisation would like to achieve, while the mission indicates how the organisation would achieve the vision. The mission sets the organisation apart from its competitors.

This study also set out to determine if the Flight Centre Limited (South Africa) vision is shared. One of the most crucial points regarding a shared vision is the fact that the vision should provide focus and energy to what the leadership wants the organisation to be and inspires a commitment from everyone to achieve it. It is important that an organisation's vision inspires enthusiasm and excitement in people when they come to work. That is what distinguishes shared vision from mission, strategy, and values. The questions posed in section D of the questionnaire to determine this, had positive responses indicating that the vision inspires the employees of the organisation.

A shared vision becomes a force that drives everyone in the organisation and it inspires people to want to bring the vision into fruition. This is true of the vision of Flight Centre Limited (South Africa). The organisation shows extraordinary success and growth year after year and is deemed one of the best employers to work for in South Africa.

Another important aspect of shared visions is that this principle cannot be established unilaterally by top management. It is a definite process that needs to be initiated and facilitated not only by top management, but certainly requires the commitment of all stakeholders concerned. Respondents had conflicting views regarding the formulation of the vision, stating that discussions were undertaken at all levels of the organisation before establishing its vision, but also contending the Flight Centre Limited (South Africa) vision was formulated by top management. Management should make sure that employees understand that the vision was formulated by management, based on discussions held with employees.

According to Senge (1990:211) shared visions emerge from personal visions. People's personal visions often include dimensions that concern family, organisation, community and the world at large. A shared vision is not truly shared until it connects with the personal visions of people throughout the organisation. Traditionally management did not build the organisation's vision on people's personal visions; this in turn failed to inspire people (Senge, 1990:213-214). As stated in chapter 4, Flight Centre has built a strong community based on its working ethos of the family, the village and the tribe. Every employee is therefore committed to value their customers and their colleagues as being the most important. Their egalitarian philosophy, strong leadership, systems, processes and spiritual and physical commitment to empower themselves personally and professionally make them unique.

Senge (1999:9) states that the practice of shared vision involves the skills of unearthing shared "pictures of the future" that foster genuine commitment and enrolment rather than compliance. He reiterates this by saying that commitment to an idea is important. According to him it is more than mere compliance to an idea (Senge, 1999: 171-172). Commitment implies that there is some gain to be had for the individual, whereas compliance refers to the fact that there is no gain to be had and that the individual is merely avoiding the negative repercussions of non-compliance (Goldman, 2002:14). Compliance is doing your work and fulfilling the wishes of others (Neher, 1997:238-240). Commitment is to contribute positively to the working environment; to attempt to make a difference for the collective good of everyone involved in the business enterprise (Goldman, 2002:14). Flight Centre Limited is a strong believer in setting goals and in turn rewarding and incentivising their team members to achieve these goals. According to them "what gets rewarded gets done." Their employees are hard workers but also enjoy the many social aspects of the company including buzz nights, award ceremonies and team gatherings.

One of their philosophies is "if your work isn't fun you shouldn't be doing it." (Flight Centre A. 2005).

A shared vision enables employees to identify their own roles in the organisation and the society at large. It provides a context within which workers at all levels can make decisions, because the activities reflect what the organisation wants to create. Flight Centre Limited believes that each individual has the opportunity to own part of the organisation through profit share in the business ownership scheme (BOS). This system is implemented in South Africa. Ownership means that the employee regards the business of which they own partly, and work in, as their business – not just Flight Centre Limited's business. In all ownership areas (particularly BOS) the organisation has global consistency. Employees have the opportunity to own a share of the organisation by acquiring shares and participating in Option Plans. The organisation also follows a philosophy of taking responsibility for success or failure. Employees do not externalise, rather internalise for the reasons for success or failure and accept total ownership and responsibility, but not always total control (Flight Centre A. 2005).

## Concluding Remarks

The survival and success of organisations in an unforgiving competitive environment centres on an inspired shared vision and the achievement of operational excellence through correct conduct. It is crucial for leaders to consider more than merely how they can redistribute assets and rethink operational strategies in response to their competitive environment. They have to create a vision in the organisation that can lead people in the direction to which they hope to move. The importance of a shared vision and a "learning organisation" is, according to Senge (1990:205), fundamental to successful organisations of the future.

This study set out to determine if Flight Centre Limited (South Africa) has a defined vision and to what extent the vision is shared. It is evident that the organisation circumscribes a vision and that the vision is generally shared by employees contributing to the astounding success of the organisation in South Africa.

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