

## Executive Education Module “Raising Visionary Capacity”

Vision is widely acknowledged to be one of the prominent traits of inspirational leadership. We expect our leaders to provide a clear path forward into the unknown territory, to inspire us with new horizons and be our guiding lights for our journey into the future. We seek leaders that ignite us with a compelling vision that touches the head as well as the heart, and bonds us around a shared purpose and direction. Yet, while we easily identify the critical nature of ‘vision’ in the toolkit of great leaders, we provide little direction on how to develop and grow one’s personal visionary capacity.

The recently developed, academically grounded module “**Raising Visionary Capacity**” provides a developmental learning and practice framework by identifying the critical dimensions of visionary capacity, and creating a leadership practice field for experimentation with practical approaches and methods to grow these capabilities.

### Purpose of Module

Explore the leadership dimension ‘Vision’ in an interactive session. Initiate discussions and exploration of what might be, and how to prepare for it. Have participants generate visionary perspectives, and prime their minds for future discontinuities. Have participants reflect on personal visionary capacity, identify growth opportunities and practice new ways of embracing the future.

### Duration and Setting

Sessions are designed to run between a half day (minimum 2.5 hrs) and a full day (8 hrs). Group sizes of 20 to 35 participants are common, but smaller groups (12 people) and larger groups (up to 120 people) have been accommodated.

The session uses a variety of work forms, such as lecture, conversations, exploration, voting, reflection, duo exercises and meaningful and fun re-energizers.

### Key Questions Addressed

- What is leadership, what is vision, and how do they relate?
- What makes a powerful vision?
- What dangers to be aware of?
- Therefore, what is responsible, visionary leadership really?
- How to develop, and maintain, one’s personal visionary capacity?
- What leadership behavior and mindset to adopt for realizing visionary growth?

### Audience

The module is designed for board room executives, senior leaders, management team members, next generation leaders, and those to whom concepts such as vision and inspiration are personally relevant.

In addition to executive education programs, the module also lends itself very well as an introduction or a red thread through meetings designed to facilitate an open strategic dialogue between participants, such as strategy off-sites and conferences.

## Academic Foundation

The module is based on our vast experience in helping senior leaders see and experience the future early, and subsequently develop a coherent perspective on changing dynamics. It combines concepts and ideas from the field of strategy with those from the field of (social) psychology. It builds on grounded research in decision making under uncertainty, behavioral economics and psychology, and introduces novel ways of engaging with the future such as FuturePriming™ and FutureFacts™.

## Add-ons

The module allows for several extensions, that seamlessly integrate with the standard module. E.g.:

- **Visionary Communication** – expands into the field of communication: how to convey vision in an inspiring fashion. We discover and practice fundamental components of visionary communication, and build a personal vision that is both inspiring and authentic. (1.5 to 2.5 hrs module);
- **Scenario Planning** – incorporates the acclaimed field of scenario planning, both in theory and practice. Provides a hands-on experience of this base approach in future exploration (1.5 to 3 hrs module);
- **Leadership Landscapes** – builds on the work by Tom Cummings and James Keen, and adds a layer of reflection on one's personal leadership behavior. Using a diagnostic, participants gain insight and explore their defaults and gaps across the leadership landscapes. (1.5 – 2.5 hrs module)

## References and Praise

The module builds on our framework 'Visionary Leadership', which unfolds two developmental dimensions for growing visionary capacity. It has been part of several leadership programs, such as:

- **Wharton School of Business** – as part of the 1-week leadership program designed for CEOs from US financial institutions. We delivered the module to 47 participants in an afternoon session, and ran the add-on module 'Visionary Communication' in the evening. It rated 4.7 (scale 1 – 5), with praise such as:  
*"As we dug deeper personally and challenged ourselves to have a wider lens, I felt I was growing";*  
*"Terrific at bringing out open-minded thinking – it was valuable to see it happen to myself in the exercises";*  
*"Thank you for opening my eyes"* (reference available).
- **Nyenrode Business University** – as part of a high-end program designed for executive and non-executive board members. We ran a 3 hour workshop, 21 participants. It rated 4.5 (scale 1 – 5), with praise such as:  
*"Eye opener on how to look at future developments";*  
*"Inspiring View";*  
*"Fantastic story, clear and good graphics"* (reference available).
- **Multi-national leasing company** – part of company's in-house executive leadership program, we ran several full day workshops based on this module. Ratings varied between 4.5 and 4.7 (scale 1 – 5).

## Delivery Capacity

Rob-Jan de Jong is an inspiring and engaging facilitator with over 10 years of delivery experience at senior level. After several years as strategist at ABN AMRO Bank (1995-1998), he set up a consulting firm and developed multiple powerful methodologies around future engagement. In executive education, he facilitated over 100 sessions in the last 5 years, both in academic environments (Wharton, Nyenrode, Cedep/Insead) and corporate in-house leadership programs.

An advocate of experiential learning, he aims to create highly interactive, exploratory learning environments. He combines grounded, in-depth content with several work forms, such as table conversations, personal reflection, duo exercises and real-time practices. These formats typically transform the learning environment into a conversation and practice field, with ample open dialogues.