

“Rocket Fuel”

The One Essential Combination That Will Get You More of What You
Want from Your Business

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Book Note by Dave Kraft

At the top of every company is a leader who focuses outside—the Visionary—and one who manages inside—the Integrator. Integrators ensure commitments are kept, deadlines are met, and resources are managed. Integrators align resources to make the Visionary’s dream a reality. There are two distinct types of leaders in all small businesses: the “Visionary” and the “Integrator.” One sees the future, and the other makes it happen. All human beings have a God-given set of capabilities—what Dan Sullivan would call “Unique Ability.” Or in other words, a true skill-set or genetic makeup.

A Visionary is meant to be a Visionary, and an Integrator is meant to be an Integrator. You are either one or the other, rarely both. An entrepreneur’s lust needs to be counterbalanced with a manager’s prudence and discipline. That is our ultimate message. Figure out which one you are, assume that role, and excel! We have the great fortune to help liberate Visionaries from the shackles of the day-to-day details. Integrators find validation of their unique talent, grabbing the reins of a company day-to-day and creating organizational clarity, accountability, focus, and harmony. If you are a Visionary, you are one of only 3% of the population that create two-thirds of the new jobs in our economy.

HERE’S WHAT VISIONARIES BRING TO AN ORGANIZATION

We strongly believe that internally referring to roles more by what people do (e.g., Visionary or Integrator) creates clarity and does a much better job than traditional corporate titles of capturing the true contribution of each person within an organization.

The Idea Generator. As a Visionary, you have lots of ideas. A key value you bring as a Visionary is this ability to discover and figure out new ways to make things work; the Big Picture. The smaller and more detailed things become, the less they interest you. Sound familiar? Seeing the Future. A Hunter Mentality. Your type of hunting is for ideas, deals, opportunities, and solutions to big problems.

THE VISIONARY ROLE: HERE’S WHAT YOU DO

- Entrepreneurial “spark plug”
- Inspirer
- Passion provider
- Developer of new/big ideas/breakthroughs
- Big problem solver
- Engager and maintainer of big external relationships
- Closer of big deals
- Learner, researcher, and discoverer
- Company vision creator and champion

THE VISIONARY DNA: HERE'S WHAT YOU ARE

- The founding entrepreneur
- Have lots of ideas/idea creation/growth ideas
- Strategic thinker
- Always see the big picture
- Have a pulse on the industry and target market
- Research and develop new products and services
- Manage big external relationships (e.g., customer, vendor, industry)
- Get involved with customers and employees when vision is needed
- Inspire people
- Creative problem solver (big problems)
- Create the company vision and protect it
- Sell and close big deals
- Connect the dots
- On occasion do the work, provide the service, make the product

THE VISIONARY CHALLENGES: HERE'S WHAT YOU AREN'T

Staying Focused. “I struggle with maintaining focus and following through.” You start many different projects at once, while only a few get completed. You have too Many Ideas. Your latest idea can actually sabotage your best idea. “My ever-growing wish list is always bigger than our resources are capable of tackling; “Too many ideas.” And another said, “I’m always trying to get 100 pounds of sh*t into a 50-pound bag.” Entrepreneurs have an unrealistic optimism.

Steve Jobs of Apple was once described as having a “*Reality Distortion Field.*”

Whiplash. Whenever you turn your head to the right to pursue a new idea, it forces the whole organization to the right. Then, following your natural Visionary instincts, you turn your head in the other direction. Eventually, they lose all sense of where they are headed. Miscommunication runs rampant.

Sweating the Details. The same ability that allows you to create a vision is inextricably attached to your lack of ability to communicate it well. **Developing Talent.** You naturally order your young, high-potential, talented leaders around—and end up running them off instead of developing them. You are a rock star, and this is your stage. Your company is your identity. This view leaves little space for talent to develop around you.

THE VISIONARY DNA: COMMON CHALLENGES. WHAT'S GETTING IN THE WAY?

A lack of Visionary self-awareness is a common pattern. Why didn't they initially see themselves as a true Visionary, or maximize this potential?

1. They may lack role awareness.
2. They may lack ability awareness.
3. They aren't fully aware of your own natural gifts as a Visionary.

I began to turn everything that wasn't for a Visionary over to our Integrator.

4. Not willing to let go. Your need for control, or a lack of trust, is keeping you from letting go enough to embrace the Visionary role.

You're suffering from what we call the Five Frustrations:

1. Lack of Control
2. Lack of Profit
3. Don't have the right People
4. Hitting the Ceiling
5. Nothing Is Working

It's time to seriously address the company's structure, people, and process. So now what?

THE SOLUTION: EMBRACE YOUR VISIONARY NATURE

If you are a Visionary, you must delegate the role of implementing your ideas in order to elevate yourself to your true talents. One visionary describes his role as "The facilitator of creative ideas and relationship builder." As the old proverb so accurately notes, "Vision without execution is just hallucination." The idea isn't enough: it must be implemented to have value. You will now have to decide. Are you willing to delegate and elevate? "If you are looking to grow your company, you can't do it without an Integrator.

At some point you will have to relieve the weight carried on your shoulders and find someone to carry it with you." Making someone else's vision happen is a very noble calling, vocation, or purpose. Who is the integrator in your organization?

Are you an integrator? Every organization must have someone playing the integrator role to truly build a company to the next level.

HERE'S WHAT INTEGRATORS BRING TO AN ORGANIZATION

The following characteristics are typical Integrator representations.

Running the Day-to-Day.

Integrators are typically very good at leading, managing, and holding people accountable. They remove obstacles so that people can execute. Typically, they operate at a more

detailed level than their Visionary counterparts. Larry G. Linne, along with co-author Ken Koller, describes the value of an Integrator in their book *Make the Noise Go Away: The Power of an Effective Second in Command. The Steady Force*.

An Integrator is the type of person who is obsessed about organizational clarity.

They are great at making sure people are communicating within the organization. Integrators are fanatical about resolution and forcing conclusions. They are great at managing big organizational projects. They are masters of follow-through. When priorities need to be set for the organization and everyone must be aligned with those priorities, they are right at home keeping everyone laser focused and driving results. They create organizational focus and accountability.

Integrators create organizational lucidity, enabling the right hand to know what the left hand is doing—keeping everyone in sync. The Integrator has the powerful ability to point a group of people all in the same direction. The integrator focuses on making sure we all live and breathe our Core Values. It's about continuously developing new ways of solving problems and making sure those new solutions are executed and communicated throughout the organization."

The integrator is the "Voice of Reason" in the organization

THE INTEGRATOR ROLE: HERE'S WHAT YOU DO

- Clarity
- Communication
- Resolution
- Focus
- Accountability
- Team unity
- Well-managed projects
- Follow-through
- Tiebreakers that keep things moving
- No obstacles or barriers
- Prioritization
- Execution
- Steady force/cadence/consistency
- "Glue" holding everything together
- Consistent beating of the drum ("row, row")
- P&L results achieved
- The business plan executed
- The leadership team harmoniously integrated
- Leadership, management, and accountability for the leadership team
- The company operating system being followed by all
- All the arrows pointed in the same direction
- Visionary ideas being harnessed: "Visionary Prozac"
- Day-to-day tasks run smoothly

THE INTEGRATOR DNA: HERE'S WHAT YOU ARE

Positive traits and competencies that are common to Integrators. They are as follows:

- Personally accountable
- Adept at self-management
- Decisive
- Good at planning and organizing
- Strong leader and manager
- Effective conflict manager
- Catalyst for team cohesion
- Goal achiever
- Conceptual thinker
- Employee developer/coach
- Resilient
- Adaptable
- Able to understand and evaluate others
- Forward thinking
- Problem-solver
- Persuasive
- Continuous learner

CHALLENGES THE INTEGRATOR MAY FACE

Here are the challenges an integrator faces, along with the downsides of being one. No Glory. Being the Pessimist. A good Integrator is able to poke holes in ideas, opportunities, and potential solutions. As a result, you can come off as being a pessimist or negative.

“When there is a breakdown and someone doesn't belong on the bus, the integrator has to make the tough decision and let them go.”

THE INTEGRATOR DNA: COMMON CHALLENGES

- The Integrator traits from our experience that can be construed as negative
- The job can be thankless
- Accusations of pessimism
- Being considered negative by others, as the “hole poker”
- Loneliness
- Constant friction and tension
- Frustration balancing so many resources
- Being the bearer of bad news, as the “bad guy”
- Having to do the dirty work (firing people)
- Lack of recognition
- Having to say “no” a lot

- Being accused of moving too slowly
- Setting the bar too high on self/unrealistic expectations of self

THE SOLUTION: V+I, PUTTING THE TWO PIECES TOGETHER

If you are partners co-running your business, often one of you is an Integrator and the other is a Visionary. If you are both running the business, this usually causes confusion for both you and your people. If you will divide and conquer, you will create clarity, execute better, and reach your goals faster.

HOW V/I RELATIONSHIPS BEGIN

Typically, the Visionary and Integrator relationships emerge along one of four paths:

1. They are co-founders.
2. They are partners. Everyone in the organization clearly knows each partner's role and responsibility.
3. An existing internal team member becomes the Integrator.
4. The Integrator is hired from the outside.

The polar differences between Visionaries and Integrators mean they are always driving each other a little bit crazy.

“One point of view or a single, uncontested power is rarely a good thing. Each company's leadership takes a place along what we call the “Visionary Spectrum.”

The Visionary Spectrum assesses how much Visionary is needed in a particular organization. This determination changes based on three factors: (1) type of industry, (2) growth aspirations held by the leaders of the organization, and (3) the degree of change/complexity the company faces.

ARE YOU READY?

The Four Readiness Factors

1. Financial readiness (affordability)
2. Psychological readiness (ready to let go of some control)
3. Lifestyle readiness (ready for fewer hours, or the same hours with a different focus and less frustration)
4. Unique Ability® readiness (ready to be 100% you)

All freedom comes from laying down boundaries.

With an underpinning of structure, you will actually free up creativity and exceptional results.

THE ORGANIZATIONAL (ACCOUNTABILITY) CHART

Three major functions in the average business venture:

1. Sales and marketing
2. Operations
3. Finance and administration

Only one person oversees Sales and Marketing. Only one person runs Operations, and only one person manages Finance and Administration. When more than one person is accountable, nobody is. Only clear accountability will boost you to the next level. These three functions cannot operate independently of each other. That's where the Integrator comes into the picture. The Integrator is the person who harmoniously integrates the major functions of the business. The people heading up the major functions report to the Integrator.

The Visionary

It is important to stress that the Integrator reports to the Visionary.

When you choose someone to fill a seat, you want to be certain that person is operating in his or her God-given talent.

YOUR LEADERSHIP TEAM

The Visionary, Integrator, and the people heading up the major functions are your Leadership Team.

Don't muddy up the waters inside your organization with titles that don't tell your people anything about what you are actually doing for the team and company. Most Visionaries and Integrators face four common issues that need to be smoked out and ultimately solved. Here they are:

1. Not Letting Go. It's just important for the Visionary to not manage the other functional leaders. These are not necessary either, and they add complexity and confusion to your structure. Accountability is most effective when it is a simple one-to-one relationship.
2. Sitting in Multiple Seats. First, the role should be consistent with their Unique Ability®—something they really want to do and are good at. Second, they will report to the Integrator in that specific function.

3. Wearing Multiple Hats.

4. Having to Sit in Both the Visionary and the Integrator Seats.

As the business grows, this single combined V/I structure (and void) will tend to hang around for a handful of common reasons:

1. It simply hasn't occurred to the Visionary that someone can help run the company.
2. The Visionary can't yet see the financial payoff.
3. The Visionary wants an Integrator and just can't figure out how to get one in place.
4. The Visionary gets it (though they may not admit this to others) and simply doesn't want it.

Half the time, when we first engage with a company, we find a single combined V/I seat occupied by a Visionary.

It's vital that the Visionary gives the new Integrator room to operate—without meddling.

A common problem in companies when a new Integrator joins is that the Visionary still tries to run the company. When you have two people accountable, nobody is really accountable, and it leads to confusion and ineffectiveness.

DOES IT REALLY TAKE TWO?

In our experience, this combined Unique Ability® only happens about 5% of the time.

Most other Visionaries exhibit most of the characteristics on the Visionary traits list and relatively few of the traits on the Integrator list. We just ask that you are completely honest with yourself, as there is a 95% chance that you are not that rare person.

You need absolute core alignment in your Visionary/Integrator relationship. Standing together is critical, as any small gaps between the two of you will show up as canyons to the rest of your team. A visionary being totally in sync with his Integrator is “same pageness.”

If you really want to tap into the full power that your unique V/I combination can deliver, we urge you to adhere to the following 5 Rules.

RULE #1: STAY ON THE SAME PAGE

A vital rule we've been teaching for many years is that the Visionary and Integrator must stay on the same page. As an effective V/I duo, you really must be on the same page. If not, you'll either make your team uncomfortable or give them mixed messages. Then identify, discuss, and solve current issues.

RULE #2: NO END RUNS

At the heart of this rule is an attempt to obliterate situations where either the Visionary or the Integrator is doing things to impede the effectiveness of the other. An end run happens when an employee goes around a manager to complain or get a better/different answer to his problem.

RULE #3: THE INTEGRATOR IS THE TIE BREAKER

This rule addresses the fundamental questions about how decisions are actually made in the organization. On a healthy team, eight out of ten times, everyone will agree with the solution. However, two out of ten times they won't, and the Integrator needs to make the final decision.

Consensus management does not work. Not everyone will be pleased in these situations, but as long as their views have been heard and the team is healthy, they can usually live with the decision. It is okay to disagree with a decision, but once the decision has been made, everyone on the team must commit and go forward. The thought of relinquishing this decision-making authority to an Integrator might be shocking or scary to some Visionaries. If in fact the Integrator is uncomfortable and/or is consistently making bad decisions, he needs to be fired.

RULE #4: YOU ARE AN EMPLOYEE WHEN WORKING "IN" THE BUSINESS

Being an Owner sitting in an Accountability Chart seat should entitle you to no more rights than an Employee sitting in an Accountability Chart seat. The Integrator makes final decisions "in" the business. Being the owner of the business does not carry with it any right to a specific seat in the organization. If you are not the right person for the seat, you should be removed from that seat—for the greater good of the organization.

RULE #5: MAINTAIN MUTUAL RESPECT

If you have a lack of respect for each other, you must end the relationship. Life is too short. You must share a high level of trust, openness, and honesty as well. Anything else sends signals to the organization that will chip away at your ability to build a truly great company. Simply put, you should never make a negative comment about your V/I counterpart to anyone in the organization—ever.

FRICITION

You need to understand that tension is normal and should not be confused with any lack of respect. Be aware that some Visionaries initially respond to this new V/I relationship with a feeling of being "put out to pasture." This usually passes once they realize they are still very much connected, contributing, and communicating with the entire organization. Rather than being put out to pasture, you have been freed up to engage your true God-given abilities, and the organization is now drawing on your greatest talents.

PART 1: VISIONARIES SEEKING INTEGRATORS

We have found that only three scenarios exist in companies that do not yet firmly have an Integrator in place:

1. You cannot identify an Integrator among the current team—you'll have to look outside.
2. There is an Integrator in your organization somewhere, but you just have not recognized them yet— and they are just waiting to be discovered.
3. You have an existing Visionary/Integrator combination (typically a partnership), but your two roles have not yet been clarified to divide and conquer.

Integrators—A Scarce Commodity

Only 5.5% of the world is truly cut out to be an Integrator. Said another way, of all the Integrators out there, only 2.5% are likely to be a great match for you as a Visionary. That's scary! Experts can consult with you on using powerful profiling technologies to help you identify the optimal Integrator puzzle piece to fit your Visionary puzzle piece.

The Integrator Job Description

1. Faithfully executes the business plan,
2. Leads, manages, and holds the leadership team accountable
3. Integrates all major operating functions
4. Resolves issues effectively—seeing
5. Ensures that everyone is truly following and adhering to the company's core processes
6. Dependably demonstrates a relentless obsession with values alignment,
7. Effectively collaborates with the Visionary
8. Confirms that all key messages are properly and consistently cascaded across the organization.

Use the Four Readiness Factors

1. Financial readiness (affordability)
2. Psychological readiness (ready to let go of some control)
3. Lifestyle readiness (ready for fewer hours)
4. Unique Ability® readiness (ready to be 100% you)

If you can't fully commit, you will have false starts. Initiate a search and find your Integrator match. In the interview process, you are looking to assess three different dimensions:

1. How well do they fit with your Core Values?
2. How well do they align with your passion and purpose?
3. How well do they match with the roles and responsibilities you've identified for their seat

Are you convinced that they get the role, truly want the role, and have the capacity to excel in the role? (GWC)

Most Visionaries underestimate the proper level of Integrator compensation.

On-board your new Integrator. An experienced recruiter suggests you hire an on-boarding coach for the first few months. If you choose to manage your own on-boarding, make sure you take these five steps:

1. Accelerate Learning
2. Secure Early Wins
3. Achieve alignment
4. Build the Team Dynamic
5. Provide the necessary Tools

INTEGRATORS SEEKING VISIONARIES

You will need to learn very early what the Visionary is willing to let go of. If you are good, however, your Visionary will eventually let go of everything they should." Before joining a visionary as their integrator, take your time. Date a while before jumping into this marriage. Some Visionaries aren't ready. Some will never be ready. Being a great Integrator depends more on the ability to manage human energy than being an industry expert. "Don't mistake activity for productivity. Creativity is productivity—it just doesn't feel like it at first."

Once the vision is clearly established, create a strategy and next steps. These usually become the 90-Day Priorities." To be an effective Integrator, you have to maintain a proper balance between the "in the business" and the "on the business" stuff. The Integrator needs to set the proper expectations for the Visionary, assuring him that the vision will be executed, but the timing may be longer than the Visionary desires.

The visionary's challenges are staying on track and focused, staying organized, and keeping his hands out of the details of the business. The integrator takes the projects and implements them, relieving the visionary time to focus "on" the business instead of "in."

Like many changes that are worthwhile, the path is simple—yet it is not easy. We sincerely believe that the V/I duo is one of the most powerful discoveries for taking a company to greatness. In order to make good decisions, the integrator must be clear on the direction. To find the right direction, answer the Core Questions that follow. We strongly recommend that you engage your full Leadership Team in answering the following questions as well. This will create more buy-in from the team and produce an even better quality of work.

Question 1: What are your Core Values?

Following is a list of some values you can use to discover your 3–7 Core Values:

- Compassionate
- Does the right thing even when it hurts
- Competitive
- Hungry for achievement
- Encourages individual ability and creativity
- Accountability
- Services the customer above all else
- Strives for perfection/Never satisfied
- Strives for continuous self-improvement
- Helps first
- Growth-oriented
- Mutually respectful
- Bases opportunity on merit, no entitlement
- Creative and imaginative
- Not cynical
- Humbly confident
- Gritty
- Self-propelled
- Hungry to learn
- Fearless
- Finds a way to say yes
- Walks the talk

Once you've discovered the Core Values that define you, bring them to life in your V/I relationship. Communicate them regularly and them to evaluate everyone in your company. Make sure each member of your team is living by them and making every decision with these Core Values in mind.

Question 2: What is your Core Focus?

Crystallizing your Core Focus will create clarity to help you make good decisions. This level of focus will give the Integrator clarity on where to aim all of the company's resources and maximize every opportunity. It will also keep the Visionary from getting distracted by “shiny stuff”—anything that is not in your Core Focus.

Question 3: What is your 10-Year Target?

It is vital that you both create and agree on a one-sentence, long-range goal (five or more years out);

Question 4: Who is your ideal customer, and what is the most appealing message to them?

You should decide exactly what you're selling in a short, sweet, and simple message and decide who your ideal customer is for that product or service.

Question 5: What is your Three-Year Picture?

If a Visionary and Integrator can clearly see the same picture, and everyone's energy is going in that direction, you'll eliminate at least 50% of the confusion, murkiness, delays, and bad decisions that most teams experience.

Your Three-Year Picture should fit on one page, consist of 2–4 “Measurables” at the top

Question 6: What is your One-Year Plan?

Most companies make the mistake of trying to accomplish too many objectives per year. When everything is important, nothing is important. Discuss and decide on the three to seven most important priorities that must be completed. Setting unrealistic goals is the biggest trap entrepreneurs fall into. Goals are set to be achieved.

Your One-Year Plan should fit on one page, consist of two to four measurables at the top

THE 90-DAY WORLD

Break the one-year plan into quarters. There are four “90-Day” quarters in a year, and you can meet to set quarterly priorities. In the 90-Day World, you must establish only the three to seven most important priorities for the company, the ones that must be done in the next 90 days.

The bottom line is that you need to work on the biggest priorities—the Rocks (90-Day Priorities)—first. Once your vision is clear, you will set better 90-Day Priorities. By limiting priorities, you can focus on what is most important. Most meetings in business are weak and not productive,

Your meetings should be passionate, intense, exhausting and never boring. The only reasons for missing the weekly Meeting are vacation or death. Don't reschedule it and don't cancel it. Your agenda should fit on one sheet so that you're only managing one piece of paper. Great meetings happen when problems are solved. Once the issue has been identified, discussed, and solved, the solution usually turns into an action item that ends up on the To-Do List. Discuss whether any messages need to be communicated to the organization based on decisions you made today.

By setting 90-Day Priorities and implementing weekly check-in meetings, you create both a 90-Day World and a weekly focus. Keep good connections between the Visionary, the Integrator, and the Leadership Team.