

# THE DONALD COOPER CORPORATION

Speaking and coaching internationally on management, marketing and profitability



## Management tool #A-4:©

### As business owners, leaders & managers, our 1<sup>st</sup> job is 'clarity':

Company Name: \_\_\_\_\_ My Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Regardless of what anyone tells you, as business owners, leaders and managers, our first job is 'clarity'. Without 'clarity' at every level of our business there can be no clear focus, compelling value, team commitment, urgency or accountability. And 'clarity' begins at the top. If we as leaders are not clear about the 10 things listed below, who else in the organization could possibly be? Lack of clarity, urgency and accountability are three of the biggest challenges in many businesses today...but it all starts with 'clarity'.

I'm sorry that there are '10 clarities'. That's a lot. It would be so much easier if there were just 3 or 4 ...but there aren't. Management is complicated.

Print a copy of the '10 Clarities' listed below for each member of your management and supervisory team (yourself included) and, working separately, use the boxes on the left to rate the business's clarity from their perspective, on a scale of 1 to 10 (with 10 being 'we're very clear'). Collect the completed sheets then summarize and analyze the results. Is there 'clarity...or not so much? Do you and your team agree on the degree of clarity in the business in each of the '10 clarities'? Often, the 'boss' thinks that there's absolute clarity...but no one else sees it that way.

Then, use the 'calculator model' at the top of Page 3 to determine your businesses' total **Clarity Score** out of a possible 100%.

**The 10 'Clarities:** Rate your business on each of the '10 clarities', on a scale of 1-10 in the boxes below:

1. Clarity about who our **target customers** are and what life's really like for them. What they value, what they fear and what they really want from us. When buying, using, maintaining or disposing of what we sell, are we clear about what they're really trying to do, what they want or need to know, how do they want to feel and about how much do they expect to pay?
2. Clarity about the **compelling customer value and experiences** that we commit to always deliver. Compelling value and experiences that will give us a clear competitive advantage and make us the 'wise choice' for our target customers. Value and experiences that will 'grab' our target customers, clearly differentiate us from our competitors, make us 'famous' ...and grow our bottom line.
3. Clarity about how we'll effectively **communicate** our compelling value story in a crowded and cynical market. There's no point being the best if we're also the best kept secret.
4. Clarity about the extraordinary **future that we commit to create (our 3 to 5-year Vision)**. How our business must be different and will be different in 3 to 5 years. How big must we be? How big do we want to be? How 'good' must we be to be a market leader? How good do we want to be? Are we willing to do the work to become what we must become?

**Note:** Item 4 continues on the next page:

How might our business model have to change? What are the disruptive market-related, technology-related or societal changes coming down the road that could change how we do business, who our competitors are and what our customers value? Will we become the industry disruptors, or will we become irrelevant? What or who could replace us?

There's huge confusion about what a **business Vision** is, what it isn't and whether it even makes sense to have one. Businesses waste thousands of dollars to create vague, airy-fairy 'aspirational' Vision Statements that achieve nothing. To be effective, our Vision Statement should be a clear, specific and measurable, 1-page statement of what we commit to become in 3 to 5 years. It will inform, focus, challenge and inspire everyone on our team from top to bottom...and contribute considerably to our 'clarity'.

5. Clarity about **how we will get to that extraordinary future**. Specifically, each year, what decisions will we commit to make and what action will we commit to take (**our annual Mission**) to get to our 3 to 5-year Vision?

**Note:** For help in creating:

- a) a clear '**Statement of Purpose**,
- b) a 3 to 5 year '**Operational Vision**' on one piece of paper,
- c) an annual '**Mission**'...and,
- d) a specific, detailed step-by step '**Commitment to Implementation**'...

...for your business, you can purchase our 34-page, step-by-step '**Vision Critical Guide**' as a downloadable PDF, for just \$24<sup>00</sup> at donaldcooper.com.

6. Clarity about the extraordinary **bottom line** that we commit to generate. A bottom line that generates funds to reinvest in the business, pay our staff well and provide our investors with a competitive rate of return.

7. Clarity about the **technology, systems, processes, equipment and facilities** we need to develop world-class operating efficiency. To be innovative, cost-effective, customer-centric and profitable industry leaders and disruptors.

8. Clarity about the **talent** that we must attract and retain to make all of this happen. The real battle in business today is the battle for talent. What talent and experience must we develop from within, or do we need to add from the outside? Also, clarity about how **we must grow as leaders and managers**...and who is being trained to replace us.

9. Clarity about the **employment experience, career opportunities, culture and organizational structure** that we commit to deliver in order to attract, lead, engage and retain a dedicated top-performing talented team? Do we have clear responsibilities, authority, communication and accountability? Is there clarity about how we measure and reward performance and how we deal with non-performance?

10. Clarity about how we commit **to behave** along the way. The values, ethics and standards that we commit to live by...and the culture we commit to create.

**A) Our individual 'Clarity Score' out of 100 (the total of our scores in the 10 boxes)**

**B) Our company 'Clarity Score' out of 100 (the total of all our scores in the 10 boxes).**

**Note:** To calculate your total company 'Clarity Score' out of a possible 100%, total the individual 'Clarity Scores' from the bottom of each team member's completed survey. Then, divide that total by the number of team members who completed the survey. For example: If your total of all scores is 528 and 8 team members completed the survey, your total company 'Clarity Score' is 528 divided by 8, which is a 'Clarity Score' of 66 out of 100.

**Our company 'Clarity Score' is \_\_\_\_%.** The closer our score is to '100%', the more clarity we have in our business. What does the variation in individual 'Clarity Scores' and the total 'Clarity Score' tell us about what needs doing, fixing, clarifying or communicating in our business or department?

- 1.** Do we need more clarity at and from the top...and in which of the 10 key areas? What action do we commit to take to create this improved clarity? It must start at the top. When will this happen? Specifically, what will be done, by whom, by when, at what cost, communicated how and measured how?
- 2.** Do we need more effective and consistent communication in all or parts of the business so that everyone is 'on the same page'? Specifically, how will we achieve this more effective communication? How and when will we measure our improvement? Will it be by using this Biz Tool #A-4 again at a set time in the future?

**Note: Forget 'goals, targets, aims and objectives'. Let's talk about 'commitments':**

You'll notice that throughout the listing of the '10 clarities' on pages 1 & 2, there is consistent reference to 'commitments' and 'committing'.

Most businesses make the mistake of talking about 'goals, targets, aims and objectives'. They have sales 'targets', customer satisfaction 'goals', profit 'objectives' and they 'aim' to be a good employer, etc. One of my recent Business Coaching clients proudly stated on their website, "*We strive to be ethical.*" What the heck is that?

'Goals, targets, aims and objectives' are weak and wishy-washy words that leave way too much wiggle room to not perform. I believe they should all be replaced with one powerful word...**commitments**. We need to stop 'aiming' and start committing.

There's a huge difference between a goal or a target and a commitment. A 'goal' is something we score sometimes and don't score other times...and that's life. At least we tried. A 'target' is something we hit sometimes and miss other times...and it's OK. It's just a target. But a 'commitment' is something fundamentally different. It feels different, because it *is* different.

Some folks argue that we're just playing with words here...but it's much more than that. You see, when we change our language, we change our business culture. You can't have an engaged, committed and effective team without clear commitments. But, also remember that it's not a 'commitment' until they agree to it. Arbitrarily imposed commitments don't work. They create resentment.

So, please, never again talk about goals, targets, aims and objectives in your business. From now on, in every memo, every meeting, every email and every conversation, talk about your clear commitments to customers, to your team, to efficiency and profitability, to safety, to the environment and to your community. You'll be amazed at the difference it will make!