

How to Have 20/20 Vision for 2020...

By [Dr. Bill Long](#)

Each year when I was growing up on the East Coast in the early 1960s, my vision was checked in my grade-school classroom. A queue of nervous boys and girls would form; the teacher would tell us not to cross a line taped on the floor, and then we were told to read a large card with letters on it off in the distance. One by one, the students would read the lines of letters. Some students breezed through, and the teacher would call out “20/20”; others would struggle, and the teacher might say “20/40” or “20/60” or even worse. We knew enough to know that if you didn’t get a “20/20” score, there was the likelihood that you would have to wear glasses, a reality in the early 1960s that was known to reduce even tough guys to tears.

That memory, of getting 20/20 on my vision test for many years until about junior high, is with me today as I think about the year 2020, which will be upon us before we know it. I have asked each of our team members, Alleah Heise, Davon Cook and Lance Woodbury to write one thought on what you should especially focus on to have “20/20 vision” for your business as you head into year 2020. May *your* vision be “20/20” this coming year!

One Thing...

By [Alleah Heise](#)

Get Connected. I am a huge advocate for going to church, the occasional Girls Night Out, and date nights. I am told this is not that kind of “lifestyle” newsletter... so I digress. All is not lost, however. The opportunity to achieve 20/20 vision in 2020 is through *getting connected* to business leaders who are also pursuing 20/20 (or better) vision.

Finding a group of people that you can regularly meet with to discuss challenges, opportunities, and future direction and strategy is imperative. Over the last year, we have facilitated a number of different peer groups. I am always amazed at how much can be learned in such a short period of time: money-saving tips, motivating employees, tracking inventory, compensating non-family leaders... the list goes on and on.

If you’re feeling stuck or in a rut, if you need a few good ideas, or just a reason to get away from the business for a few days to meet like-minded leaders, consider joining a peer group or other structured gathering. If you do choose to participate, one thing is certain – if you do not leave with 20/20 vision, your ongoing participation is just the “prescription” to make forward progress.

One Thing...

By [Davon Cook](#)

Write it Down. Early in my career, in 1998, I worked on a seed company project to forecast adoption of biotech seed around the world by 2020. Pretty heady stuff for a 26 year-old in those exciting days of Roundup Ready and Bt introductions! I wish I had those papers today to see how close we were.

Today when we’re finally at 2020, I encourage you to look ahead to the next 20 years for your business and family. In tough financial times, you put your head down and focus on the fundamentals. It’s harder to devote time and energy to planning for the distance. Yet those long term goals are why you’re working so hard today.



Here's a method. Write down (yes on an actual piece of paper) your age in 2040, and the age of your family members. That makes it real. What will success look like then? Your answers may differ in focus: financial goals, health of family relationships, ability to pursue other passions, new business creation, spiritual endeavors... Wherever the focus, envisioning a different phase of life and the road to get there puts today's efforts in context.

One Thing...

By [Lance Woodbury](#)

First, examine yourself. When considering our play on "20/20 vision in 2020", I cannot help but think about Jesus' own vision metaphor in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 7:5: "You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye."

In our work with family businesses partners, siblings, and the outgoing and incoming generation, this idea of first looking at yourself and your own judgments, assumptions and biases is critical. Not only are we called to such behavior; effective family relationships, sound business culture, and experiencing the joys of farming together require us to occasionally look first at where we might be wrong.

As you consider the next year, examining your own judgment of others might be the reflective act that helps you appreciate your partner, improve your relationship with your sibling, parent or cousin, and ultimately lead you to forgive those that have trespassed against you. Removing the log from your own eye may in fact lead to a stronger relationship for years to come, well beyond 2020!

