

Active Thinking Pragmatism

Chairman, EBT Global Headquarter & Japan Planology Society

Professor of Emeritus, Chukyo University, Shozo Hibino Ph.D.

Abstract:

This keynote paper deals with the research history of Breakthrough Thinking and mainly focuses on the practical philosophy or pragmatism of thinking paradigm. Author proposes new concept of sympathy philosophy or resonant philosophy and the further research directions after Late Prof. Gerald Nadler.

Keywords: Breakthrough Thinking, history, pragmatism, practical philosophy, sympathy philosophy, resonant philosophy

1. Introduction

The book “Breakthrough Thinking” was published in 1991 as the result of joint research with late Prof. Gerald Nadler, the University of Southern California. Before 1 year ahead, Japan Planology Society was established in 1989 and she will celebrate the 30 year anniversary in next year. The joint research with Late Prof. Nadler and author started when author went to the graduate school, the University of Wisconsin for studying Industrial Engineering in 1965, although my major of the university was electronics. Late Prof. Nadler was the professor of productivity in the factory shop and author proposed to research the productivity of creativity jointly for 21st Century.

The joint research was focused on mainly “Theory of Problem Solving Approach” in the 1970’s and we published “Planning Design Approach” in 1979. This was a historical event, because this Planning Design approach was the forerunner of the recent Design Thinking.

In the 1980’s, author had implemented lecturing tours of “Breakthrough Thinking” sponsored by the Chubu Industrial Association and The Japan Junior Chamber also invited me as the lecturer of Breakthrough Thinking. During these lecture series, the young philosopher in Gifu Shotoku University suggested me in the talk show, saying “Professor Hibino’s thinking is completely opposite to Rene Descartes Philosophy and you can create new philosophy” After this talk show, author started the philosophy with

Prof. Nadler, Afterward, Prof. Robert Hollinger, famous philosopher of the Illinois University joined for philosophical research of Breakthrough Thinking..

As the result of this joint research, we concluded that the modern present thinking, the reductionism has been out of date and we have to change a new thinking, Breakthrough Thinking, based on “ system philosophy”. In order to expand this philosophy, approach and tools and accelerate human thinking paradigm shift, we have established many organizations, such as Japan Planology Society, Thai Planology Society, The center for Breakthrough Thinking in the world and we hold the first and second World Congress of Breakthrough Thinking.in Chukyo University and we will hold the third World Congress of Breakthrough Thinking in Vietnam in 2019. For making the planning of the 3rd World Congress, the 58 planners including Japan Planology Society, Thai Planology Society, The every country Center for Breakthrough Thinking organized the mailing list of minimal (Mainstream International Initiative) and started to discuss the plan of the 3rd World Congress.. With this 3rd World Congress as a turning point, we will challenge to facilitate the human thinking paradigm shift in the world. Author hopes that the members of Japan Planology Society could contribute to this effort. Since we will round up people who want to participate the 3rd World Congress in Vietnam this year, please apply for participation from Japan.

2. Pragmatic Philosophy in the factory shop

Although “Philosophy” is metaphysics theory, which dissociates from the reality by philosophers, from the viewpoint of the history of developing the theory, Breakthrough Thinking is really pragmatic philosophy, because it came from the factory shop productivity development.

Late Prof. Nadler was Jewish and author is Japanese. Judaism and Buddhism are basically the philosophy based on daily livelihood. Breakthrough Thinking has been affected by these daily livelihood philosophies. Since Jewish people must create their future by themselves, because of their fatality, their thinking becomes basically “Design thinking” or “to do thinking” and their culture is hunting culture as a hunting people. On the contrary, Japanese who believe Gods or Buddha are cultivate rice and have naturally a “to be thinking”. We are facing the drastic turbulent age and we cannot see the clear future on the same line of the past. Late Prof. Nadler and author decided to utilize the Jewish Design Thinking and on the contrary, we utilized the idea of unlimited solutions by using Japanese eight million Gods and then we utilize the LOD steps, that is, List-Organize-Decide steps. This point is different from one God thinking, one right

solution, that is, the conventional reductionist thinking.

Breakthrough Thinking is familiar with the rice-growing countries and it is expanding to Buddhism country of Vietnam, Thailand. Does it relate to any such a culture?

3. Active Philosophy

In the history of the development of Breakthrough Thinking, late Prof. Nadler started more than 50 steps as IE technique in the factory shop and these techniques were very complicated and only professional could not handle them. So author and late Prof. Nadler took action on simplification. First of all, as Gifu philosopher advised me, comparing with Descartes' reductionism, we summarized the key ideas of Work Design into seven key principles and I have had a lecture tour in Japan by the name "Breakthrough Thinking". Late Prof. Nadler and author went to a coffee shop in Los Angeles and talked about the new book title and named it "Breakthrough Thinking" and published it in 1990. As a result of publishing a new book, many companies jumped as new thinking that anyone can use. In Japan, many companies such as Mitsubishi Electric, Toyota, Canon, Epson, Yasukawa Electric, and TOTO, etc. and the Junior Chamber of Commerce, also began to be used. Also the local governments, such as Gifu Prefecture, Usuki city.

This Breakthrough Thinking has also been translated into Korean, Chinese, Taiwanese, Russian, Indonesian, Vietnamese, Danish, etc., spreading to other countries as well. In many countries, The Center for Breakthrough Thinking in many countries was established, and two World Congress were held, and the 3rd World Congress will be held next year, hosted by the Center for Breakthrough Thinking in Vietnam.

4. Paradigm shift in Thinking

We have continued our collaborative research with late Prof. Nadler. Efforts have been made to compare the seven principles with Reductionist Thinking and develop it into the paradigm shift in thinking theory. We organized the seven principles into three basic philosophies and four phases, four tools.

As for the Differences in each philosophy, Breakthrough Thinking seeks a situation specific solution, while Reductionism seeks a general solution. As for information, Reductionism clarifies problems from a large amount of data collection, but Breakthrough Thinking collects the minimum information to make a solution. In addition, the way to capture the phenomenon is fact finding in reductionism, but in Breakthrough Thinking, we see things as a system.

As for approach to problem solving, reductionism will be solved with the step of analyzing the current situation, finding the problem, considering solution measures, replacing it with them, and fixing it, but in Breakthrough Thinking, We approach to problem solving by the following four steps: people, purpose, ultimate future and the concrete living solution. The Reductionism is a past-based paradigm and Breakthrough Thinking is a future-based paradigm. The tools for problem solving are also different. The Reductionism is mostly analytical tools, but tools of Breakthrough Thinking are different between conceptual methods and instruments for making mechanisms. The two thinking paradigms are spectacularly opposite thinking paradigms. In addition, at this stage, in order to strengthen the research philosophically, Prof. Robert Hollinger, a philosopher of the University of Illinois joined our collaborative research.

In the 16th century, God's Thinking that lasted more than a thousand years, created various contradictions and the world was causing great confusion. In such a turbulent age, Rene Descartes advocated the reductionism and paradigm-shift in thinking occurred. Likewise, in contemporary times, the confusion of its reductionism erupts and the problem creates problems continuously. It is clear that Breakthrough Thinking is a new thinking paradigm that was born in such a confusing situation.

Of course, as the Reductionism did not deny the god Buddha, Breakthrough Thinking never denies the god-Buddha Thinking and the Reductionism. In the Breakthrough Thinking, we actively use the Reductionism to gather minimal information to create a solution, and we also use it at the time of system architecture, So we use both Reductionism and Breakthrough Thinking like a hybrid car as we need them...

5. Further Research Directions

While co-authoring with Prof. Nadler, unfortunately, he passed away, but somehow author managed to publish the posthumous works as a called 'Extraordinary Breakthrough Thinking'. The published book is really a "Bible" of Breakthrough Thinking. You can get it on Amazon, we recommend you to read it all by all means.

After the death of Prof. Nadler, our efforts have been made continuously change the Breakthrough Thinking as the following points:

1) Study of empathy philosophy or resonate philosophy as research topics of the human phase

Professor Emeritus Hollinger, our cooperative researcher, said that "globalization is the process of transforming the world into Europeanization". In other words, the world of capitalism, freedom, equality, selfishness is spreading to the world. People can see

phenomena in which evils such as enlargement of rich and poor and egoists are noticeable. Author would like to continue my research on the philosophy of Breakthrough Thinking as Professor Hollinger advice us to change the philosophy of European centralism. I would like to start a philosophy research group at JPS. Why not join us...

2) Research on Artificial Intelligence

At present, there is an Artificial Intelligence research group, using Softbank Pepper, We are trying to develop AI robot facilitator. The challenge of how much artificial intelligence is possible, especially idea generation and system architect ring...

3) Other EBT applications

From June this year, "Breakthrough Thinking Marketing Research Group" will be launched at Nagoya Institute of Technology. It is a study to utilize the EBT in various fields. In the turbulent era, it is a study on how to break through traditional marketing theory on the extension line of the past. We are looking forward to the participation of more people.

4) Research on globalization

Currently the Global Innovative Hyper Consultant Group is held monthly at Chukyo University. Especially with the 3rd World Congress, we are acting as a division to expand Breakthrough Thinking to the world. Also we are also aiming to create text for overseas consultants. Ultimately, we are aiming to shift the thinking paradigm of mankind.

6. Prolog

Breakthrough Thinking is a way of thinking born from the factory shop, so it is essentially a practical philosophy and pragmatism. For example, when you want to make a phone call, who will you first call (human phase), what purpose will you call for? (Purpose phase), what is its purpose? Ideal for what to talk about? (Future solution phase), what is the specific concrete way to speak it? By using three basic philosophy and four tools, it is better to call more effectively than simply calling.

To make Breakthrough Thinking effective use, It is not enough to just know. Three basic philosophy, four phases, four thinking tools, it is essential to thoroughly exercise until you acquire it. We would be grateful if you would participate in workshops and research sessions in various places and master them.

FORMULATION OF BUSINESS VISION USING EBT

Center for Breakthrough Thinking in Vietnam Huy N. Luu

Company vision - the top thing people can normally think of when they want to mention about company strategy - is defined as "a declaration of an organization's objectives, intended to guide its internal decision-making" (Wikipedia). Nearly any company owner stated, or at least thought of it, their vision and tried to communicate as an organizational wide initiative. However, not many business owners know how to build a proper vision. The process of creating one was not clearly mentioned on research papers or business magazines but more on definition and criteria, even on the most most well-known article on Harvard Business Review - Building Your Company's Vision.

While considering it is the most basic element and used as the foundation stone of any strategy, readers often found out vision in the same format of "We want to be the leader of an industry in Asia", "We want to be the top 3 in industry X in country-name Y>>", "Earn \$100B by 2030", or formula such as "Creating the best benefits for investors and employee..." or the like. Those nothing peculiar statements are doing against the rule of being unique to survive in the market, yet because of inertia, hardly be changed after published.

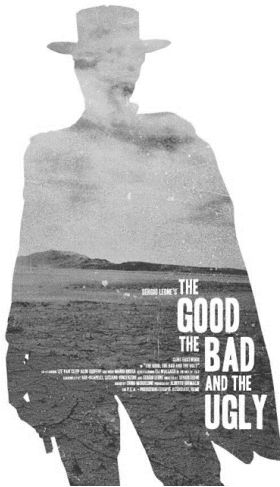
Furthermore, people often get confused about vision and mission. The top leaders are confused of them, apparently their subordinates would be even more confused. In this world of complexity and millennial dominated world, confused ideas will soon be forgotten. As Kazuo Inamori mentioned in his books, a company is the bond of human minds. If vision and mission are used to bind minds together, we can put a question why people still trying to create two different statements that ended up in the absence of mind. While vision statement encompasses the "to be" aspect, the mission engraves the "to do" aspect. "To be" requires "to do" to exist, and vice versa. Just as space and time can be fused into one continuum, why we don't just simply use a more integrated approach.

The principal part of a vision are core ideology and envisioned future, and core ideology consists of core purposes and core values (Jim Collins et al., 1996). This article aims to build a process and at the same time simplify complexity in creating a vision for a company, and combining vision and mission statement into one, here after mentioned as "vision".

A simpler definition of a vision

The problems with somewhat predefined visions mentioned above normally rooted from answering a simple question "What you want to be". Not everyone can be a philosopher in one day or one year, then the answer will come to mind from personal taste. Fame, money, the quest for a position on the market or a dream to supersede competitors are among the most frequently things to start with. Let us find the gap between the result of that thinking process and extraordinary visions.

- “We want to be the leader of XXX industry in Asia”
- “We want to be the top 3 in ... in <<country name>>”
- “Creating the best benefits for investors and employee...”
- “Earn \$100B by 2030”



- To make the world more open and connected (Facebook)
- Enable human exploration and settlement of Mars (SpaceX)
- Organize the world's information and make it universally accessible and useful (Google)
- Inspire the world, creating the future (Samsung)

Image source: Pinterest

Illustration: comparing normal and extraordinary visions

We can find out that the extraordinary visions hardly describe any specific position in the market or monetary term. They are clearer on the *raison d'être*, are far more bigger in aspiration, humanity dimensions and can encourage people on the long run. Furthermore, recent visions are not only a description of the future, they also start with a verb - a good combination of "to be" and "to do". Inspired by those examples, the author suggests a brief definition of vision: **an envisioned future guided by core purposes.**

A simple process of creating a vision

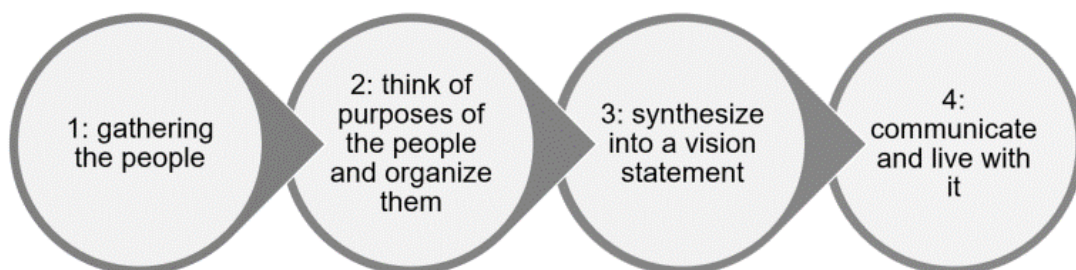


Illustration: 4 simple steps to create a profound vision

Utilizing EBT approach, we experienced several cases of creating visions for profit and non-profit organizations. All following a 4 steps process that is easy enough to help organization from very

small sized to bigger ones in different industries. Normally, it would take about 1 month to formulate a proper vision.

The first step is **gathering needed people**. A typical "vision finders" consist of the founders, managers and key persons guided by an experienced - but not biased - consultant who acts as a coach. It is normally thought of as the job of founders, but inviting key persons - all employees in case of a start-up - will make people feel "yesss, this is my business, I participated in the most important meeting to define the company". Customers who have become close ones of the company are also good contributors. We strongly suggest to organize the discussion in a space that suit the taste of your people. Anywhere that helps people to feel friendly, positive about each other. A start-up group may talk on a coffee shop by the beach, an F&B company might get a place in a resort, a military company would choose a memorial park to start with. Believe it or not, atmosphere plays an important role for this type of discussion.

The second step is **thinking of purposes and organize them**. The participants then will be asked on a focus question: "What will customers value your business? What make them coming to you?". Based on various reasons provided, the leader of discussion board will connect the ideas in to a organized fun illustration. If there are many groups of customer, we will need to dig out every purposes on each group. Everyone is encourage to explore all hidden corners of needs, including something seemed to be a taboo. For example, an academy within a giant group of companies stated that they have students, managers, universities, lecturers, researchers, etc. Lecturers, for example, have needs on "respect", "good income", "growing knowledge from participants", or odd ones such as "selling his/her book", "find opportunity to transform his/her idea into a business". Not to forget the biggest customer - their group Board of Directors. Needs from the BOD like "a place for top leader show time", "culture propagation" or "leaving a legacy for the organization" should be well taken care of.

At the time needed, the coach should use another stronger question to raise participant's level of thinking. Not only normal values, he/she now ask "What can you do to make your customers and partners feel that your business is the one they can not live without/passionate about", "How can you make customers think of working with you as a privilege", "How to surpass your competitors so they can not catch up with you in 10 years", "If you are doing things in e-commerce, what are the things that you can do and Amazon could not do", "what can you do to make yourself become future, and the current biggest potential competitor become the past" to release them from conventional "copy&paste or clone" model of thinking, get more disruptive ideas **and** actions toward an envisioned future. Participants are requested to **think of their unique features, especially to be clear of their worries** - one of the most often forgotten treasure in thinking. Ask them "What make you worry?", "What are the things you are unsure?". When you are only work with potentials, you will come up with dreams. When you work it through on deep down fundamental worries, you will come up with the dreams testified.

Connects all ideas in a structured way. Tell the participants to insert missing links and generate new ideas from existing draft. Ask what can be done now and what can be done in the long run, what to emphasize on and what make you unique. The concept of organizational vision will soon revealed.



Illustration: purposes connection from an F&B company

The third step is **synthesizing into a vision statement**. In contrast with preliminary plan, this step normally takes the most of time. The coach can ask the group on making several statements, pick the "hottest" keywords out, and form another statement synthesizing the previous ones. In our experience, there will be no final statement in the group meeting. It needs time for thinking from a person who know the whole story and has the ability to write aspirational sentences while keeping the essence among bunch of purposes. In this stage, a much more smaller decisive group shall be formed to select and refine the statement until everyone feels enlightened.

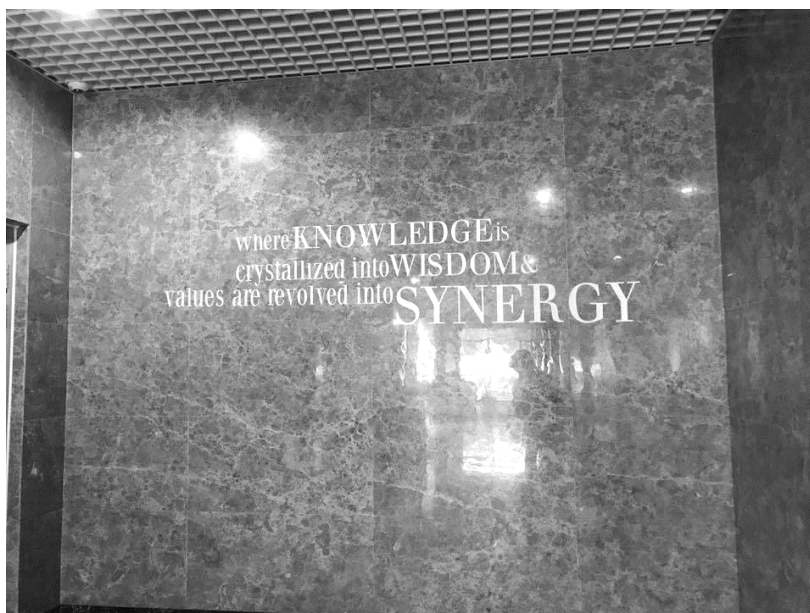


Illustration: final vision statement of an academy using this approach

After finishing step 3, step 4 becomes much more easier in the first phase - communicating, and needs long-term commitment in making activities that link with the vision to be continually reinforced in the organization. There are hundred of systems, tools and techniques to engage people with vision, but always remember to come down to everyday practice level. That is the only way to make a vision to live in an organization actually. Make it "mine", not only "great".

The approach has been tested on various businesses. It has the power of shifting the commanding heights from ground. For example, an entrepreneur once came to the author of this article and presented his work on "an auction website" and found himself stuck in the threat from eBay invasion. Released him from worry about a future that is so much unstable, working through this process helped him to find the new vision of "empowering community based micro-economy" for which even eBay can not catch up since they are "too big to transform" from a mere seller-buyer relation problem solving. It helped a company who exceled in their industry in the last 50 years but found our traditional market is fading. Basic questions helped the board of directors see a new way of serving people and at the same time leveraging a new huge market while lifting their core competency to another level. We hope that this process may enable organizations of all sizes find their own way to redefine vision in order to explore new horizons.