
From Tunnel Vision to Funnel Vision

Travel Outside Your Business

By Robert Hargrove

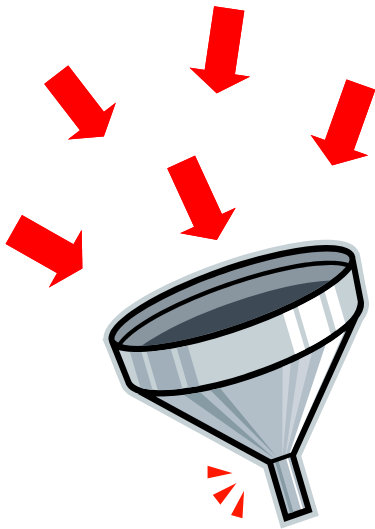
*How to help your coaching clients overcome
smallness of vision, operational orthodoxies,
and marketing myopia.*



The chances are, if your client grew up in one industry, they suffer from tunnel vision, seeing only one way of reaching goals, one way of solving problems, one way of earning opportunities. Coaching clients to moving from tunnel vision to funnel vision vastly expands their options.



Tunnel Vision to Funnel Vision?



Traveling outside your business broadens your mindset and allows you to borrow ideas from other industries that have the impact of an earthquake

Jonti, a participant from South Africa in our **MC Certification Webinar**, went to talk to a top executive at a big bank about his Impossible Future that was to be the basis of their coaching relationship. At the webinar session Jonti reported back that his client was having a hard time thinking outside the box and asked, “What would you do in this case?”

“Jonti,” I said, “when this happens, it’s a sign that the person most likely has an advanced case of TUNNEL VISION.” I have found that this is usually the result of someone spending 10, 20, or even 30 years in one company or one industry, which then leads to setting goals that lack imagination, and making plans that fall within the scope of industry orthodoxy. (A good example is a newspaper trying to figure out how to increase classified ads by raising or lowering prices, while Craigslist is totally changing the game through its free internet classified site.)

I told Jonti that in order to help his client come up with an imaginative Impossible Future that comes from way outside-of-the-box thinking, you have to move them **from TUNNEL VISION to FUNNEL VISION**. I explained to Jonti and the rest of the group that one of the best ways to do that was to get your client to “travel outside their business /industry” so as to open their minds to new visions, new strategies for reaching them, and new paradigm-smashing information. The group asked me for an explanation and I was happy to oblige.



If it wasn't for the different places I visited, I wouldn't be who I am today.

There is an old saying “I wouldn't be who I am today if it wasn't for the people I met and the books I have read.” I would like to add to that, “or the countries I have visited.” You know when you travel outside your country, you get exposed to different kinds of people, with different visions of success, different beliefs and values, different architecture, different food, different lifestyles and different ways of doing things. This all broadens your mindset

Traveling outside your business is not just about borrowing “best practices” but combining them into growth-yielding, wealth-producing hybrids

My work as a leadership guru, trainer, coach has taken me to over 30 different countries around the world and to some extent who I am today is an amalgam hybrid of each country I spent significant time in.

I am always awestruck when I take a taxi through London and see its grandeur expressed in its architecture. These noble buildings tell the tale of a sturdy, but ambitious people inhabiting a tiny island who had a shared vision of building an empire and who colonized half the world.

I have been inspired by how PM Lee of Singapore had a vision of taking his broken, previously colonized country “from third world to first” in less than a few decades, and further impressed by the ability of Singapore businessmen who could take a high-brow business idea and translate it into a practical business model that would make the cash register sing.

I have also been impressed during my visits to Switzerland, Germany, and Austria about what it meant to do everything with a commitment to excellence and quality. These countries never adopted TQM or 6 Sigma because they didn't need it.



What can your clients learn from Queen Victoria, Prime Minister Lee of Singapore, Steve Jobs of Apple?

The point is that traveling outside your country can be a mind expanding, vision enhancing, paradigm smashing experience, and the same thing happens when you travel outside your business. Let's face it, most CEOs build copycat companies by plagiarizing the biggest and best company in their industry. As a result, everyone in that industry has the same way of doing marketing, the same way of doing production, the same way of distributing their products and services, the same way of interacting with customers. It's a way to help your clients dramatically accelerate their climb up the learning curve.

Traveling outside your business opens your eyes to leaders who set impossible goals, quantum leaps, not just next steps

Yet look at what happens when someone from an industry travels outside their business. It's kind of interesting isn't it that Apple and Google, the companies who are the biggest and best producers of smart phones, were never in the cellphone business until a few years ago. They are dominating their market while copycat companies like Nokia, Motorola, and LG try to figure out how to keep up with them. I can imagine Steve Jobs asking himself the question: *How do we build a smart phone not like a cell phone?*

Herb Kellerher built Southwest Airlines not by asking how **not** to be like United, American, or Delta. He was influenced by the entertainment value of Disneyland, the small town marketing strategy and thrift of Walmart, and the compassion of the Peace Corp.

Traveling outside your business can help enable you to see that there is not just one way to fix your operation, but many unexpected ways

The idea is that by getting your client to travel outside their business (industry), you can help them not only build an Impossible Future, but a strategy of pre-eminence that will help them dominate their marketplace. I am not just suggesting that they explore what one leading company is doing in their own industry that makes them stand out from the crowd, but maybe 20 or 30 companies from different industries.



Traveling outside your business breaks the grip of marketing myopia

For example, let's say your client has a great product or service but wants to dramatically grow their business through better marketing. They are following the marketing practices of their industry and their industry does only one thing to get customers, let's say marketing through retail outlets. Well what would happen if you helped expose them to the successful marketing practices of 10 different industries and they then combined those into a hybrid marketing approach? Doing so would dramatically accelerate their climb up the learning curve.

Secondly, if your client turns out to be the only company to introduce strategic distinctions, operating systems, and selling approaches into your field that are matter-of-fact to other industries, but no one else in your industry has ever seen it before or experienced it, it will knock the competitors for a loop. Your client will not only have a good chance of distinguishing themselves in the eyes of the customer, but of growing their business exponentially and multiplying their profits.

Take clients through this process and they will think you are brilliant

How to get started: Here is something to do, if you have a client that suffers from lack of vision or is stuck in "this is the way we do things around here."

1. Introduce the idea: "Travelling Outside Your Business—from Tunnel Vision to Funnel Vision." Travelling outside your country and seeing different people with different visions and different methods for doing things that are done every day, broadens your mindset. The same thing happens when you travel outside your business and explore how leaders from different industries set goals and design strategies to match them. You move from tunnel vision to funnel vision.

2. Google some visionary, contrarian "Travel Outside your Business" case studies.

In less than an hour, you can Google 5 to 10 CEOs who have come up with visions or approaches to realizing them that are dramatically different than the rest of the pack. It's important to



Make sure you don't just visit one industry, but ten or twenty and then combine the best approaches to create a hybrid.

gather ideas not just from your client's industries, but across industries. Think in terms of ideas from at least ten industries that show different approaches to building an Impossible Future, building innovative products, supply chain improvements, and customer service.

3. Share these with your client; ask: Which ideas do they find fascinating or intriguing?

Share the ideas with your client either as a pre read to your coaching session, or as a flip chart or PowerPoint presentation. Make sure you focus on what other companies do that would be most relevant to your client (for example, standing for an Impossible Future, marketing strategies and so on). Then ask them which, if any, of these ideas do they find fascinating or intriguing.

4. Let's Play S'pose.

Once your client comes up with a list of good paradigm-smashing ideas, ask them to play "Let's Spose." Here are five examples of a small company's from different industries who came up with a truly outside-the-box Impossible Future. What can you learn from them? Or, here is how the leading (most innovative) company in your industry does this. Let's suppose your company did it that way.

5. Combine the most successful ideas to create a hybrid by connecting the dots.

Take out a flip chart and use it to tease out the best ideas from the many. Then connect the dots and create a hybrid approach to a game-changing strategy, new product development process, marketing approach and so on. The next step is to create a simple action plan and get going. What could be a quick win your client could accomplish in the next 30 days, 60 days, 90 days?

6. Coach people in action.

I guarantee you that all the ideas I have mentioned about traveling outside your business really work, "if you work them." You can't just lead your clients through the process on a flip chart and leave it their hands, you have to coach them in action.



About the Author

Robert Hargrove is a world-renowned, revolutionary thought leader in the field of talent development and coaching. His motto is *Better Leaders, Better World* and he believes that coaching leaders to achieve an Impossible Future is the fastest, most powerful way to achieve both.

Hargrove is the founder of Masterful Coaching and served as a Director of the Harvard Leadership Research Project. He has been awarded for Distinguished Public Service by the United States Government for his coaching work with political leaders.

Hargrove has also played a pivotal and highly instrumental role in rebranding campaigns in companies like Adidas, Philips Electronics, Estee Lauder, and the National Hockey League.

Hargrove's coaching approach is one of the only methods which delivers real ROI. According to one client, "We pretty much stuck with the Masterful Coaching approach and it made the company hundreds of millions of dollars."

Hargrove is the author of best selling business book *Masterful Coaching* and many other books on leadership, coaching and collaboration.



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