

**Jacob Morgan 00:00**

Before we get into this episode, a quick message from our sponsor per septics, in our post pandemic world, designing and delivering an exceptional employee experience has become a business imperative, as we all know, for sceptics can help you get a clear picture of your employee experience with a continuous listening and people analytics platform aligned to your specific business goals. discover why more than 500 enterprise customers and 30% of the Fortune 100 Trust per septics to capture employee feedback, supported by insights and prescriptive actions for every level of the organization, Learn more at per septics.com forward slash future of work, and perceptive is spelled p e. r ceptyx.com. And again, /future of work.

**Cameron Herald 00:55**

If you went to the doctor today, and the doctor did, you know his cancer screening on you said, Oh, you know, Jacob, you've got a cancerous tumor in your lung. How long would you let it stay for a few months, two months, it gone, right? You'd cut that tumor out instantly? Well, when we have people in the company that aren't really working that hard, they're really negative, maybe they're not lined up with core values, they don't deliver on their promises, they're just nine to fivers. They're not that passionate. That's a cancer that spreads throughout the organization throughout your business area. And it's also not fair to the rest of the good people on the team.

**Jacob 01:41**

Hello, everyone, and welcome to another episode of the future of work. today. My guest is Cameron Harold. He's the best selling author of several books, including his most recent one, which is called vivid vision, a remarkable tool for aligning your business around a shared vision of the future. He's also the former CEO of one 800 got junk, and he is known as the CEO whisperer, and we're gonna find out why that is the case today. Cameron, thank you very much for joining me.

**Cameron 02:11**

Hey, Jacob. Thanks for having me. Appreciate it.

**Jacob 02:13**

Of course. Well, let's start with a little bit of background information about you. So why don't you take us way back when before you got into the business world, and how you ultimately got to where you are now.

**Cameron 02:26**

Okay. So I was pretty much groomed to be an entrepreneur, my both sets of grandparents were entrepreneurs. My one grandfather was the CEO of a large pharmaceutical company. My other grandmother and grandfather built a hunting and fishing resort that became very well renowned back in the 60s and 70s. And so they were really the founding of kind of that entrepreneurial families. Okay, my father was an entrepreneur as well. And he raised the three kids to all be entrepreneurs. So we've all really run our own businesses for in the 15 to 25 year range. But all of us actually ran our own businesses while we were in high school and university as well. I had my first real company, I had 12 full time employees when I was 21 years old, and just kind of went from there. So kind of that was the starting point being groomed as an entrepreneur.

**Cameron** 03:14

From there, I went on and started coaching entrepreneurs. I was a part of a franchising organization called college pro painters, and I coached 120 franchisees, by the time I was 28 years old, started coaching really before coaching was even a thing I think the International Federation of coaches and coach you both started in the mid 90s, early 90s. I'd coached 120 entrepreneurs by the time they started, including Kimble Musk, who was Elans brother and then Peter Reeve, their cousin who built Solar City. They both worked for me back in 1993.

**Jacob** 03:44

Oh wow. Okay. You can't just get away with that. I'm sure you got some fun stories of coaching and working with those guys.

**Cameron** 03:52

Oh, yeah, some good ones. Without a funny one on Kimball was when back this was this this the winter of 1993. I was training him to run a painting business. And there's a big snowstorm in Toronto where we were living at the time and he and his mom, he was living at his mommy's place in Toronto, and I think his cousin Peter Reid was living up in Thornhill. But they went out in the morning and their car was completely snowed in and had been snowed in with and they had didn't have any shovels.

**Cameron** 04:21

So they went out with pots and pans and they dug out of his car out of the snow with with pots and pans. And another one with Kimble Kimble called me one day and he was really upset one of his customers was really upset with him and I had to go to a client site up in North Toronto to visit with Kimball musk and his one of his clients and when I got to the site, the customer was pointing at all these white spots all over the ground and she was really upset that his white paint was everywhere. And I got a hose out and I put my thumb over the hose and I sprayed it and I said Ma'am, it's bird shit. You have a bird's nest up in the rafters. And she just never noticed that before.

**Jacob** 04:55

Oh man...

**Cameron** 04:55

That was a long time. Well, I was. I was a reference for Elan and Kimball in their first round of In January of 95, for a company called zip two that was the first company they built. So I've known...

**Jacob** 05:06

Man, back in the day.

**Cameron** 05:09

Oh yeah, way back. So it went on from there built out I was hired to be a partner in a autobody chain and I was the head of the franchising group for what became known as Gerber auto collision in the US,

boy dollar buddy and candidates now the largest collision repair chain in the world. I then went on I was hired to be president of a private currency similar to what Bitcoin is doing today. We did it 21 years ago, we had 30,000 companies accepting our digital currency instead of the US dollar, build that company up and we sold it, but we sold it right as the stock market was crashing, kind of in January of 2000.

**Cameron 05:41**

And then went from there and join my best friend in October of 2000 as his 14th employee, and I came on as the second in command for a company called one 800. Got junk, built them up from about 14 people at the head office when I joined when I left six and a half years later, we had 3100 employees system wide, left there about 15 years ago. Since then, I've written five books. I've been paid to do speaking events in 26 countries on six continents. I have coached, you know, the CEO of sprint, and the second in command at sprint, I coached a monarchy in the Middle East

**Jacob 06:14**

Is Sprint, is that Michel Combs?

**Cameron 06:17**

Marcelo Claure was the CEO.

**Jacob 06:19**

Okay, he was I think he was before or after.

**Cameron 06:22**

Marcello is now the chairman of wework. And he's on the board of Google and the Board of SoftBank, but he'd built up brightstar. And I met him on a plane and diagnosed him as having ADD Tourette's and being bipolar, and we just struck a real big relationship. So how did he did that?

**Jacob 06:43**

Oh, wait, I got a question. So you're sitting, you're sitting next to Marcelo on a plane? You guys are talking and you say, by the way, I think you have ADD Tourette's, and you're bipolar? Or what happened after that?

**Cameron 07:01**

Well, he was very distracted. And he kept looking around, and then he kept touching his nose, he did this nervous tic, which is a sign of Tourette's, very scattered. And even while we were talking, he was going through this roller coaster of emotions as we were talking. And and I drew up this curve and talk to him about this roller coaster curve that Tim Ferriss has written about me, and it's in my first book, double double what the highs and lows of CEOs. And I walked Marcello through that curve. And he said, while he said, You understand me, I need you to meet my wife. So a few months later, I flew out to Miami went for breakfast with Marcello, and Jordan, and we've, since become friends, I've stayed at their homes, and but I showed her the curve of entrepreneurship and also walked her through the signs of bipolar disorder. And Marcello had all of them and but it was very high functioning. And we realized that since then, most entrepreneurs are on the spectrum for bipolar disorder. Most entrepreneurs are very, very high on attention deficit, which is actually a superpower, it's not a disorder

**Jacob 08:00**

Hey, I was diagnosed with ADHD when I was a kid, and so

**Cameron 08:03**

Yeah, it's a really strong superpower for entrepreneurs, because you see what's happening with the economy, your suppliers, your customer, the website, but you get so distracted by it all that you have to delegate it, which actually allows you to get more done. And then the mania and excitement of bipolar is why people will quit their jobs and join you with why they invest in you. It's why they'll believe in you. And then the stress and depression is simply the course correcting. So just in diagnosing him with that he realized I really understood entrepreneurs. And that's how we built the relationship. When he was then appointed the CEO of sprint after selling brightstar for over a billion dollars, which was his his he started the company. He then brought me in to coach him a little bit and then two coaches second command, Jamie Jones for 18 months.

**Jacob 08:48**

Alright, so I mean, obviously, you've coached a lot of business leaders around the world. Walk me through what that means. So a lot of viewers, a lot of listeners are thinking, Okay, you know, maybe I need coaching, maybe I don't? What exactly do you coach business leaders on? Like, how do you work with them? What does that process actually look like? And that people watching and listening Can you know, start thinking through it for themselves.

**Cameron 09:12**

And the world is the world's littered with coaches right now. And you have to be very careful in understanding what it is you're selecting. So I would say that my zone is to be in the entrepreneurial operations, execution and culture space. So I teach CEOs how to build a world class company cultures inside their companies to propel growth. So with sprint, I was teaching Marcello and his team how to become more entrepreneurial, to turn sprint around from being this big kind of slow moving, kind of autocratic, dictatorial, corporate, to making more entrepreneurial decisions to merge with T Mobile with. You know, I coached a company that went on to become number two to work for on Glassdoor in the United States, another one that went on to become number 13 to work for on Glassdoor. So my work is all around operations, execution and culture. But if you think about sports coaches for a second, you could have a strength coach, a conditioning coach, a mindset coach fitness, you know, health coach, then then maybe the actual sport itself. So there's different types of coaches, I'm not there for, I don't want to be there shrink. And I don't get into anything on the IT side of the business or the finance side of the business. I'm also not there to help them, you know, set goals and, and, you know, hold them accountable. I'm there to actually teach them I'm more like a mentor than I would be a coach. Okay, the coaching world, there's something called the Socratic method where you ask a lot of questions, and you get people to figure out for themselves, I'm more giving them the shortcuts and the tricks to get there faster.

**Jacob 10:43**

Okay. So So let's say I were to come to you, because I know a lot of business leaders would do and, you know, maybe they're not CEOs or CEOs, but maybe they're leading a team. And so let's say they

come to you, and they say, hey, Cameron, you know, we would love some coaching, maybe around culture, we're trying to improve our corporate culture that you know, it's a big one, everyone always talks about that. Yeah. So where do you start? So how do you figure out what the culture is how to improve it, like walk me through a little bit about what that process looks like?

**Cameron 11:13**

Yeah, with general leaders, what I do is actually work with them on all of the skills that to become stronger as leaders. So I even launched a course called invest in your leaders, which are the 12 core modules that I help leadership teams get stronger at. So things like coaching, delegation, one on one meetings, time management, Product Management, conflict, interviewing skills, meeting rhythms, you know how to actually operate like an executive, okay, if I'm working with the CEO, or the CEO, I tried to reverse engineer their goals and reverse engineer their vision for where they're taking the company.

**Cameron 11:48**

So we start with this concept called the vivid vision, where I get them to lean out three years into the future, and describe their company all aspects of their company three years in the future. So they're describing almost as if they walked around the company, you know, like, almost like we got into a time machine. And we flew out to December 31 2024. If you walked around your business, you could describe the culture, describe how you're operating as a hybrid company, within person. And over zoom, you describe some of your technology tools, you might describe operations and marketing, and it and sales and engineering, maybe three or four bullet points, describing every area of your org chart, you talk about how your customers are thinking about you and what your employees are writing on indeed, and Glassdoor without knowing how it comes true.

**Cameron 12:33**

So I'm trying to get the CEO to visualize the company in its finished state. And then we can reverse engineer every sentence to figure out what to do to make each sentence coming true. And then much like building a home where you build the foundation, and you put up the walls, and then you put in the electrical and the plumbing, and then you put in the drywall, there's a formula for building out a business in the same way you start with the foundational building blocks, and you grow from there. Many entrepreneurs get distracted by the big shiny object, right? Some, they just read something in a book, they want to do it now. But they forget about building the core basis of the business first.

**Jacob 13:07**

Yeah. So first is why three years? Why not? Five years? 10 years?

**Cameron 13:14**

Yeah, you can have something like a B hag that Jim Collins 20 or 30 years stretch, but it's so far out that it's hard to wrap your head around how to make that happen completely. If you lean out five years, it's too far, it's too far out to actually get excited about to take it seriously. And one year out is too similar today, right? If you're describing your company in one year, it's just not gonna be tangibly that different three years tended to be the the amount of time that's kind of seem to feel perfect.

**Jacob 13:42**

Okay. And so what happens if somebody says, Oh, you know, I don't even know my company is gonna look like at the end of this year, how do you want me to imagine three years in the future, like, I don't know, I can't do it.

**Cameron 13:53**

If they're not sure what their company is going to look like in 12 months, then their employees aren't clear at all, why they're working on what they're working on. So the entrepreneur needs to have some clarity to start pointing people in that direction, even if that changes in 18 months. Let's say that I hired a group of people and I said, I want you to build me a home. But I'm not really sure what it's gonna look like just start building something. Like that would be useless, right? They, they, I could hire the best contractor in the city. And he'd build the beautiful home, but it might not look anything like what I want it to look like. So you need to point people in rough directions, so they have some idea of what they're building and why they're building it.

**Jacob 14:31**

Okay. So follow up questions that I'll ask you in just a minute. But you know, especially now a lot of people are saying, and I've had a couple people like Rita McGrath, you know, a couple of professors and academics and business leaders over the years. And I know there used to be this big trend, right? You used to create five year plans, 10 year plans. And I've gotten some mixed opinions on this where some business leaders are saying, well, it doesn't make sense to do a three year plan or a three year vision because things are changing so quickly. That You know, like who would have predicted COVID if I would have had a three year plan, or

**Cameron 15:04**

Your a three year vivid vision is very different from a three year plan. So the vision is where we're going, but I only do a one year plan, and we execute on the one year plan. So every year, you come up with a new plan, like, again, much like building a home, I'm not if we if we say, let's build a beautiful home in the city of Scottsdale, and we're just gonna be like this modern, it's gonna be three stories have all these rooms? Well, the day one that we start building, we're not going to put in the wolf stove and the subzero fridge and hang cabinets, right, we've got to build the foundation first. So you're building foundational building blocks in that first year, in your second year, you're adding to that. So let's say that you get massively hit with a global financial crisis, like 2008, or COVID hits, and you have to read reengineer your entire model, well, then you can take all of your people that are aligned in going in one direction, you can realign them very quickly. But if you have no vision, they have no idea where they're going, or why they're going there. And then they're also not really sure what decisions to be making. Again, the entrepreneur always has something swirling in their mind, and people can't read our minds.

**Jacob 16:06**

Yeah. So how do you begin? So you know, a lot of people who listen and watch the future of work podcast, I would say they're business professionals in some capacity, right? Some are maybe a little bit more senior, maybe some entry level, some mid level. But by and large, I mean, everybody's concerned with with vision, everybody usually is looking to attain some sort of a leadership level to

make an impact influence the world create change. So how do you guide people to start thinking about and creating a vivid vision.

**Cameron 16:41**

So the vivid vision for a company is the CEO, and only the CEO's responsibility to craft one, okay, and then roll it out and have other people buy into the vision or leave and go work somewhere else, right. But if the CEO is very clear on where we're going, other people can figure out the plan to help make that come true. Now, if you're a senior leader in a company, and you want to have a vision for your career, maybe you have a vivid vision for your career and what your life is going to be and you craft that personal vivid vision, you start understanding what kind of company you're looking for. So let's say that we were going to do one as a person for my career, I might think about my career life balance that I want the kind of company culture, I want to work within the kind of hours and the people I want to work with, how I'm going to operate, what behavioral traits, I'll be leveraging, what I'm going to be learning what skills I might want to be getting better at.

**Cameron 17:34**

So you're starting to think about your career and driving you towards that, instead of just waking up every day and going to work and checking email, right? So you're having at least some focus. So I've actually done one for my personal life, where I have a vivid vision that describes my personal life, my relationship with my girlfriend, my relationship with my kids, the kind of life that I'm having, what I do for fun, what I do for activities, what I'm dealing with in my health, and it has nothing to do with business, but it aligns me and I share it with friends, I share it with family, I reread it myself, and it's always kind of driving me in that right direction. So that would be a way that you know, anyone listening could craft one for themselves as well.

**Jacob 18:10**

Okay, so basically take time and start to add in are there like a specific set of questions that you need to answer in order to create a vivid vision? And can you do this for your team?

**Cameron 18:19**

Yeah, I've seen some people do a really good job at running it for their one business area. So let's say that you're the, you know, VP of a call center within a big company, you might describe what your call center is going to look like act like, like yours in the future of the kinds of people you're recruiting, the way that they all interact together, what the pulse and the energy is of that business area, how that business area starts breaking down silos and politics within the organization and becoming almost like a beacon for everyone else as being at you know, a business area they want to emulate. Right, so that you're not just becoming that one silo. So sure, there's there's all kinds of tools that an operator can use inside of a business as well.

**Jacob 18:58**

Okay. All right, got it. Alright, so I want to shift gears a little bit to talk and then we'll get back to some of the stuff in the book and vivid vision. So looking back from the perspective of a CEO, so help people understand what exactly does a CEO do inside of an organization? And what is that relationship between the CEO and the CEO?

**Cameron 19:22**

Yeah, great question. So let's go back to the home building analogy. Again, the homeowner who wants to build the home is the CEO. The general contractor that we hired to build the home is the CEO. So the general contractor needs to be so clear on what the homeowner wants to build that they can draw blueprints or plans to make that vision come true. The homeowner signs off on the blueprints, the contractor signs off in the vision. When they actually sign off on it, they can hand the blueprints of the plans and the vision to all the workers and the workers can build the home without ever speaking to the homeowner. So that's his job is to take the vivid vision for From the entrepreneur, the CEO, and start crafting the plan and the team and the operational bench to then execute on that vision and make that happen.

**Cameron 20:09**

The CEOs job is to reverse engineer the dream or the goals of the CEO. Okay, well, Harvard wrote an article about 15 years ago called the misunderstood role of the CIO. And they identified seven distinct types of Chief Operating officers. So it's different, but the CEO needs to be really good at and love doing the stuff the CEO sucks at and hates doing. Right. So if this so in my case, I was not good at it, and not good at finance. But Brian, the CEO of one 800 got junk or I became the CEO, he was great at it in finance, he loved that. But I ran sales and marketing and PR and operations and franchising and corporate culture and franchise, like the call center, I got to run all the stuff that I love to do around the people side of the business. That was stuff that Brian didn't love to do.

**Jacob 20:58**

Does the CEO also think differently about the future like when you think about the future of work, and looking at trends? Is the lens of the CEO different than the lens of the COO?

**Cameron 21:09**

I think the CEO, you know, a good one is trying to get more done with less people faster. We're trying to get some more operational efficiencies in the business. We're trying to increase revenue per employee and profit per employee and margin per employee, we're trying to decrease our salaries as a percentage of revenue. So we're looking to increase operational efficiencies, okay, looking to automate and optimize processes. Where is this CEO probably doesn't spend the time thinking about that or want to.

**Jacob 21:36**

Interesting, okay. And what happens if there's not alignment? And this happens a lot, right? I mean, oftentimes, you see a lot of CEOs out there, to get the golden parachute, they drive their organizations into the ground. But you know, there's been so many articles and case studies and stories written about CEOs who are, you know, not doing a great job. So in that kind of situation, what happens if you're a CEO or leader of that kind of an organization, you kind of, you know, you don't align with what the business leader is doing the CEO.

**Cameron 22:07**



It's interesting, I just actually spoke with the COO yesterday of a company, I'm not going to reveal the name of the company because it's a well known brand. But the COO has no desire to ever be a CEO. Interesting, which I thought was really intriguing, right, a \$3 billion company, she has zero desire to ever be the CEO of any company. She loves the CEO role. So if that CEO is being replaced, she would help vote for and help interview and help select the person she would then report to, she doesn't want to become the heir apparent, which is pretty intriguing. And it's actually very, very common, that COOs have no desire to be CEOs. Why is that? Different behavioral traits, most entrepreneurial CEOs like to fly in the strategy circle, they like to fly and kind of the 30,000 foot level, people that are classic CEOs like to get into the operations and the guts, and they're, they're more like, we want to solve the problems, we want to operate on the efficiency, we want to figure shit out, you know, a CEO, I'll give you a fun example. A CEO would say, we need to get all the right people on the bus. And they think that's, they think that's a discussion about recruiting, I mean, like, like, it's a one sentence phrase from good to great. But the CEO would say, let's talk about recruiting, and they'll spend three days talking about the interview process and the selection process and rating resumes and how to rate people on a bell curve and what questions to ask and how to actually probe and they could spend forever talking about interviewing to perfect the process. And the CEOs, mind is blowing like they don't know, they they're losing, they can't stay in that zone for that long, right? So it's just a different, it's just a different group. It's kind of like saying, you know, there's probably not a lot of hockey players that really want to play, you know, basketball. Yeah. Even though they're both athletes.

**Jacob 23:53**

So how do you so this is, this just got me thinking, like, for people watching and listening? How could they tell and it's not necessarily that they will be COO or they will be a CEO. But as far as qualities that they lean towards, whether they're more of that kind of vision, you know, thinking big picture, or they're whether they're more like the CEO of actually running things, or their questions or their behaviors, like things that you look forward to tell which category you would fit more in CEO or CEO.

**Cameron 24:24**

Yeah, and my my realm, or my world is really the entrepreneurial CEO. So it's kind of the 5 million to \$500 million zone. Okay. I think if you're if you're the professionally managed CEO of a major fortune 500, etc. It's a different length lens, a different skill set, right? They have to be good at dealing with boards and dealing with good public companies and maybe thinking strategically and acquisitions. If you're in the entrepreneurial world CEOs need to be good at vision, attracting talent, spotting opportunities, delegating with goals and outcomes. And then the CEOs again just have to be good at finding the people aligning the people finding operational efficiencies, deciding which projects can give you the highest momentum, right? momentum creates momentum. So more operational CEOs of entrepreneurial firms are looking for, you know, faster and momentum versus perfection. When you get into the bigger businesses, you start getting into things that need to be more perfect, right? There's more moving parts, and you got time to work on that kind of stuff. So it's different in terms of the, whether you're a kind of smaller medium enterprise or the enterprise level companies.

**Jacob 25:39**

Okay. Alright, that makes sense. So getting back to this idea that you have this vivid vision, what's the difference between a vision and a vivid vision because I think you also did a TED TEDx talk or a TED talk where the title was intriguing and said, why your vision sucks?

**Cameron 25:56**

Yeah. I've been asked to do three different TEDx talks over the years. My first one is still on the main Ted website, on raising kids as entrepreneurs. Your vision statement sucks was the one that I did a few years ago. So most business schools teach you to come up with a vision statement or a mission statement, right? You get all your leaders into a room, you put your favorite words up onto a whiteboard, you vote on all of the words, you end up with six words, you mash them up into one sentence, no Go team, right? It's supposed to align people. But it never works. It's never worked. But it's all we had, right? The next best thing we ever had was a book by Gino wickman, came out called traction. And it talked about the vision traction organizer, and it was a set of 10 goals. And those 10 goals are supposed to align, you know, and again, that was good, but they were goals. So the vivid vision is that full description of every single aspect of your company in its finished state. It's a four or five page description. It's an entire document versus one sentence, that there's no way that the one sentence can tell you what your operating culture is like, and how your employees work together and how you exhibit your core values with your customers on a daily basis and what your energy and pulses like in your meeting rhythms in your interviews. So it's, it's again, it's almost like you and I hopping into the DeLorean time machine, and jetting off into the future and then getting out December 31 2024. And walking around and describing our entire company. Yeah, we don't know how it came true. But we can just we can describe what we see

**Jacob 27:33**

How it's kind of fascinating that like, and to be honest, I don't even remember where the idea of mission and vision statements came from. But I remember even many, many years ago when I was in college, and we were doing like exercises, you know, case studies pretending you are running a company. And everybody would tell you like what a mission is what a vision is. It has to be two sentences, it has to be that and I'm always thinking like, bullshit where who came up with this? Like, why is it three sentences? Why does it have to do this and that, like, it just didn't make sense to me. We treated it kind of like it was a, like a math proof. Like, yeah, this is it. And it can't be anything else. So I mean, do what what is a mission and a vision? And do you remember where this stuff came from?

**Cameron 28:20**

No, I don't. And I remember learning it as well and thinking there was something off with it at the time. I also remember asking my university professor in organizational behavior in third year university, I said, we were talking about interviewing and hiring. And I put my hand up, I said, Have you actually ever hired anybody? And I was asking, like, I wasn't being a smartass. I just wanted to know whether what he was talking about had any experience, or whether he was just reading the textbook to us? And he said, No, but have you? And I said, Actually, yeah, I have 12 full time employees in my company right now. And the whole room turned and looked at me. I was like, Oh, fuck what that you know. And it was that kind of an experience where I realized that much of what's in a textbook being taught by professors

is the best that they have, but it's not experience. And so we ran with the best that we have a funny story about Kimble musk. I recruited Kimble from Queen's University in Canada, which would be kind of one of the Ivy League schools in Canada. And he was in the business program at Queen's. And he said, and I talked to him in the interview, I said, Why do you want to be an entrepreneur? And he said, Well, my professor just told us the other day that we were being groomed to be middle managers at corporations, and I almost threw up. Because he realized that he's not a middle manager in a corporation, right? He's an entrepreneur. And I think we just have to recognize that what we're learning in textbooks was the best that we had at the time. But this vivid vision tool now that's being used in 26 countries. Our Registered Trademark is now showing that it's different. I learned it the idea from the Olympic coach, we took the idea of visualization the athletes used and figured out how do we use visualization in the business world. And we kind of created this concept. So that's where it came from 23 years ago,

**Jacob 30:04**

Do organizations still even use traditional mission statements and vision statements?

**Cameron 30:08**

They do. They use mission statements and vision statements core values as well which are needed but often miss. misused I actually led the strategic planning meeting for Hootsuite years ago. And they realized that their four core values weren't core values at all. They were merely behavioral traits so we redid their core values completely. I think a B hag Jim Collins term of that that big hairy audacious goal is really powerful. And it's it's again misused often people say, Oh, I want to change a billion lives that's not a B hag. B hag is that 20 or 30 years stretch that from the outside world seems impossible from the inside world seems plausible. And it's an aligning force. Like, you know, Boeing's B hag was to democratize air travel and Nikes. B hag in the early 70s was to crush Adidas. Those are really powerful kind of mantra cult like kind of mantras that are powerful. And I think that the B hag, the core values, your core purpose, the why you exist, the Simon Sinek kind of made famous Simon was on our board of advisors for years before he wrote his book, that that core purpose is powerful. And then the vivid vision would be kind of the four corners of your jigsaw puzzle.

**Jacob 31:16**

Wait, Simon was on the board of which company?

**Cameron 31:19**

He was on our board at one 800 got junk Simon read about Brian and I in Fortune magazine in 2003, flew out to Vancouver to meet us to see if we were real, and came to my home for dinner that night. And we were talking and he had originally it was a cone shaped his golden circle the why how what was originally a cone. And if you looked at the cone from the top down, you saw the why how what if you looked at it from the side, you saw the layers of CEO VP and customer. So yeah, that's how we met Simon. He ended up speaking at our conference helped us on markita five person marketing agency in New York at the time, and he helped us with some of our branding and marketing and then was on our board of advisors for about a year.

**Jacob 32:00**

Wow, you have so many backstories about people because I you know, obviously Simon Sinek is super famous now, but I'm sure a lot of people are kind of like Wait, wait a minute.

**Cameron 32:09**

You know, I, I have an email from Simon because my TEDx had gone more viral. And he wanted to know how to get his TEDx talk to come more viral. I've got still got that email, like how do you get more views? What was the secret? Well, he drove marketing towards it, like you get you buy traffic so that more people see the link, and then they like it, and then they push it out. It's just it's just a classic marketing buy. So that was early enough with the TEDx that he drove enough traffic to it more people liked it started to share it, and then it lit up. And then when it lights up, Ted puts you on the homepage. So I got you know Ashton Kutcher to push mine out. I got Tim Ferriss to push out mine. You know, mine went but it didn't have the kind of call that Simon's did mindset, a few million views in his the third, third most watched of all time.

**Jacob 32:53**

So Okay, one more Simon question. And then we'll move on. So 2003 we're looking at almost 20 years ago. Was Simon a different person? I mean, he was young, you know, he's a young kid back then, almost 20 years ago.

**Cameron 33:09**

He was different. Yeah, he was he was just as smart. He was definitely understood marketing and the customer and positioning and had the confidence, but it was more of a, it was more of a confidence that he had back then.

**Jacob 33:26**

Hey, everyone, it's Jacob. Before we get back to the show, just a quick reminder, the future of work requires that leaders put people first employee surveys, and people analytics from perceptix can help your organization capture critical feedback about the employee experience, and then focus action where it matters most to drive the business forward, learn more about how you and your organization can do that by visiting [perceptix.com](http://perceptix.com), forward slash future of work. And again, that is [perceptix.com](http://perceptix.com). forward slash future of work. And now back to the show.

**Jacob 34:09**

One of the things that you talked about in the book, you had this exercise that you go over a mind map. And I think it's a very useful, and I'm sure a lot of people have heard of this. But I think it's a very useful exercise to walk people through. And I'm always a fan of like tools and exercises. And I'm sure so our viewers and listeners like things that they can actually do to start thinking about these things and implement them. So walk us through what is the mind map technique? How does that work? Where do people start doing it?

**Cameron 34:38**

Sure. So just grab a notebook and a pen. And you can actually Google the term Mind Map and look at the some Mind Map images as examples. But let's say that you wanted to do a mind map for your

personal vivid vision, right? You were going to describe yourself three years from now. And you kind of in the middle of the page, you write vivid vision and then what areas might you describe so you put off Few branches. And the first branch might be family, and then fitness and then friends and finance and, you know, fun and faith or spirituality and travel. And you might end up with like seven or eight areas that you want to describe. And then for travel, you might say, well live in different cities, and, you know, live abroad and change my tax base and, you know, do cooking courses, you might start jotting ideas down and family, I want to be able to spend time with them, but not too much, or whatever it's going to be right. And you just start jotting down ideas. And then what does it mean spend time with them, I want to go on trips, I want to have experiences with them, I want to get them out of the house and be active. And we're out of the house, well, I want to take them kayaking, so you, you kind of build off of each of the areas. And it becomes almost like this little spider web, or a mind map of ideas.

**Cameron 35:48**

And that's what the way I like planning things. It's the way I like visualizing a company or a business. Whenever I have a new project or a new idea, I tend to start with a mind map. And then I take all of those ideas, and I build them out into lists of bullet points. And then I just prioritize the bullet points and I just start executing off those interesting. You know, if you were doing a mind map of your home, we're going to build a home. Well, what might it look like? How much should it cost? What types of rooms are we going to have? How will the rooms layout, you know, who comes you know, so you start describing it? And then it gives you some basis for thinking through things.

**Jacob 36:28**

Okay, so for the vivid vision, I mean, because that's, that's the main thing I think we're focusing on and people who want to craft one, whether it's for themselves, their team or their organization, are there specific buckets or specific areas that they need to make sure they cover?

**Cameron 36:45**

I think the ones that I just kind of listed are are powerful, the friends family fitness, faith, finance.

**Jacob 36:52**

And what if it's for a team or an organization, which ones are the

**Cameron 36:55**

Let's say let's say it's your, let's say it's for the company itself or team, you would talk about how they exhibit the core values, how they work together, how they measure data, how their drive their own accountability, how we onboard people into our business area, how we off board, people from our business area, you know, how we celebrate successes, how we grow each other's skill sets, you know, all of those kinds of things you might think through.

**Jacob 37:21**

Okay, and again, this is three years in the future. Yeah. Okay. So let's say I do that I'm the leader of a team or leader of a company who knows, I put this together, I have this four page document. Now what I mean do, what do I share with people and talk about it? Or what's the next step?

**Cameron 37:38**

Yeah, the first step is to start sharing it with people and saying what parts of this document most excite you what parts of this most inspire you, because they might read it and only get inspired by three or four paragraphs, or three or four sentences great, but at least they know what they're inspired to work towards. And then you want to show them how a lot of the areas of the vivid vision apply to all of them. You know, living the core values applies to everyone. You know, working better as a team applies to everyone being more accountable and hitting our goals and delivering on our promises. That's across everyone. So you start showing them how it really relates to everyone. Okay, and then you explain that some sentences of the vivid vision are not going to happen until the third year, some parts aren't going to happen until second year, some parts might happen in fourth quarter or third quarter or second quarter of this first year. But it will happen much like building a home, right? You can't get all upset on the third week of building your home that you can't see the cabinets and the drywall up yet because you're still building the foundation. Right? Yeah. So just explain and they get it they understand.

**Jacob 38:41**

Okay. And what happens if you start getting feedback from people who don't agree, don't see eye to eye they start challenging things like is part of the vivid vision, having that feedback phase? Or is it just what you've created and it's it.

**Cameron 38:57**

It's mostly this like, again, if I was the CEO give a great example. Like I named Dean Gagnon was CEO of a company in Vancouver called city max had about 100 employees. And we took all of his 100 employees off site for the day to run a training session, a lot of the content is in my invest in your leaders course. So we ran the training session, at the end of the day, he actually read out his vivid vision to all the employees, okay, and at the end of reading out the entire document and handing it out to all of them. He turned to the entire group of 100. And he said about 15% of you hate what you just heard. And he said, That's okay. But now you know that this is the right time for you to quit, and find a company that you are excited about because this is what we're going to look like.

**Cameron 39:37**

And about six weeks later, 12% of his company had quit. A year and a half later, Dean's company ranked as the number two company in British Columbia to work for the number one company to be in BC to work for was a nurse next door who was another client of mine that I was coaching. So he was right in knowing that it was the wrong place for some people. But you have to have the courage of your convictions to say no, it's what we're building. Now. Give it a go. Like, when Steve Jobs launched the iPhone, you know, back in 2007, if he listened to all of his customers, and the customer said, well, you're missing the keyboard. He didn't give a shit. He didn't want a keyboard. Now it's almost ludicrous to think of a phone even with a keyboard, right? It's insane. Back in 2007, all the palm pilots, blackberries, they all had keyboards. Yeah. So his vision of what he was building was so clear. And he said, Hey, if you want to go build things with keyboards, go work at blackberry go work for palm. But

**Jacob 40:34**

Is Blackberry even still around? Are they like floating around somewhere?

**Cameron** 40:37

They are Research In Motion. Yeah, friend of mine actually led their public offering. Yeah, they are very, very shell of themselves. For sure.

**Jacob** 40:45

So you mentioned something interesting. I feel like a lot of people are very obsessed with keep employees 10 years, how do we get people here to stay as long as possible? But were you setting the example of that CEO? What was his name of the company?

**Cameron** 40:59

Dean, Ganja city, Max

**Jacob** 41:00

City Max? Yeah. He he basically said, you know, a lot of you were 15% of you read something, you're going to hate it, which means that you shouldn't be here. So kind of a two part question here. First, as an employee, right? I'm not a leader, I'm an employee of an organization. Yeah, what should I look forward to tell me if I should be at that organization or not?

**Cameron** 41:23

The first is the core values? And do you really line up with the core values that the organization is, is really wanting to do? Let's see, are we assuming the company sucks? Or the company is great?

**Jacob** 41:35

Um, I don't know we can we can go with it.

**Cameron** 41:38

let's go with let's go with it's a really great company, but it's just not the right company for you. Okay, right.

**Jacob** 41:44

Let's make a lot of money. Right?

**Cameron** 41:47

Like, let's say that, let's say that you want to choose Google's culture, or Microsoft. Both amazing companies, both technology, both hire computer engineers, both on the left Coast of the US both pay really well. Their cultures are very, very different. So you need to look at the core values and say, is that for me? Right? You need to look at the way that they operate and say is that for me, you need to look at the physical space and say is that for me? There's people at Microsoft that would hate working at Google, I've been to both their head offices, they're extraordinarily different. There is different as like a raspberry and a banana. You know, both are fruits. I happen to hate bananas. I happen to like raspberries. Yeah. Now you can't say I don't like fruit. I just don't like bananas now. So you need to decide do I like what they're offering? And if you're not clear on what they're offering, you really want to

find out, you also really want to be clear on the vision of the organization. Right? Where are they going? Do I want to be a part of that journey? Or would I rather be a part of a different journey?

**Jacob 42:45**

I feel like a lot of people don't even know the answer to these questions about their company.

**Cameron 42:51**

Most people don't even know the questions to look out with their company, right? They take a job and they start. But what you're what you really want to look for is, where are they going? What's their B hag? What's their core purpose? What are their core values? How do they live their core values? How do they interact with each other? What's the direction of the company going in? How do they treat their people? What are the Glassdoor reviews like? Is that for me, because there's other there's other people who would be like, I don't want to work like those people who would have hated working at one 800 got junk. We ranked as the number two company in all of Canada to work for 1.4 6 million companies, we ranked number two, but there's people out there that would have hated our culture. Because we were fun. We were entrepreneurial. We were driven. We were goals. We were almost a cult. We had no physical private offices, Brian and I didn't even have I didn't even have a desk for last my last 18 months, I just moved around inside at different tables with my laptop, people would have hated that culture. Or they could have come in and said, Oh my god, I found heaven. This is spectacular now, right? So you need to really think about yourself and what what feeds you what turns you on what energizes you? And is that for you?

**Jacob 43:59**

Yeah. And again, to your point, I feel like a lot of people don't even know this about themselves or their company. We're very much paycheck. What's the role? What's the brand, I'm working for benefits. Okay, that one pays more, I'll go there.

**Cameron 44:13**

So I did this. I did this when I left one 800 got junk because I didn't take any jobs or offers for a period of three and a half months. And every day for 20 minutes a day. I did mind maps and journals and lifelines and made lists and thought about stuff. So I made lists of what do I love? What do I hate? What am I really good at? What do I suck at? What's every business process I've ever organized? What's every business project I've ever LED, what kinds of people that I like working with who did I hate working with what drains me at the office, what feeds me at the office, and I kept all these lists in this black book. I still have the book in Vancouver. And at the end of three and a half months, it was so crystal clear of what I love to do. And it was so obvious of what I never ever wanted to be around me in the business world again.

**Jacob 45:00**

Yeah, I think that's an important lesson of, we got to take time to think about these things. And oftentimes we're very caught up in the day to day, you know, kids more like, we don't really take a step back to get out of the grind, so to speak, and then by the time we do, we're just so sucked in it, that I think that time is important.



**Cameron 45:22**

And it really doesn't take a lot of time. Like if people would watch one hour of TV less a week, for two or three weeks, they'd have enough time to think about their career and or life in a whole different way. Yeah, you know, to do a personal vivid vision means, you know, watch five hours of TV less than the next couple of weeks, and you have enough time to write a great vivid vision. Yeah. And if you're not a great copywriter, and you want to make it pop off the page, hire somebody off Upwork or Fiverr, and pay him 50 bucks and have them polish it for you.

**Jacob 45:51**

Yep, yep. Okay, so that's if you're not a leader, what if you are a leader, you're a leader of a team or leader of a company? And you are, what signs should you be paying attention to that maybe people are, you know, shouldn't be there? In what do you do? Because I feel like there are a lot of organizations out there where leaders know that there are some employees who are just kind of phoning it in, they're not like, you know, really there. And they're always saying, Well, how do I get them to be in there? You know, what do I do to turn them around? And we can't say that people like,

**Cameron 46:22**

Fortune magazine asked me in that article that Simon and I met and they said, How do you motivate your employees, I said, I don't motivate employees, I hire motivated people. And so when a leader has doubt, they have no doubt. Right? When you know that the person isn't working out, you got to get rid of them. So I've always said that your A players are like race horses, your B players are the good solid workhorses. And the C players have to go to the glue factory, you just have to get the C players out of the company. If you know if you went to the doctor today, and the doctor did you know his cancer screening on you said, Oh, you know, Jacob, you've got a cancerous tumor in your lung? How long would you let it stay for a few months? No, six months, gone, right? You'd cut that tumor out instantly. When we have people in the company that aren't really working that hard. They're really negative, maybe they're not lined up with core values, they don't deliver on their promises, they're just nine to fivers. They're not that passionate. That's a cancer that spreads throughout the organization throughout your business area. And it's also not fair to the rest of the good people on the team. Why would you let us see player come in and ruin all the A player's days, you can often you can often cut the C player and never have to even replace them. Because the A's and B's are so happy, they're gone. They'll just get more work done anyway. Yeah.

**Jacob 47:41**

How did these people can get into the company? Because obviously, I don't know people are interviewed, right? I mean, it's not like they just show up, but you interview them. And there's a team, who usually decides, oh, yeah, this person is a great fit, and they get hired. You would think that line, right?

**Cameron 47:56**

Yeah, well, once again, one of the core modules in my invest in your leaders course I keep mentioning was on interviewing, and most managers, most leaders have never had any training on how to do a job interview. Right? So module number seven on the course, is all about actually doing job interviews. But if you don't know how to do a proper interview, if you don't know how to screen the resume, if you don't

know how to rate people on preferences, if you don't know use open and closed ended questions and use a pregnant, pause and really probe and use torque, then there's no way you're getting the right people, because you don't even know how to screen them in the first place. Yeah, so you and so you're trying your best, but it's kind of like a kid that goes off to play Little League Baseball. If we wouldn't teach them how to hold the glove, and how to toss the ball and how to hold the bat. They're going to come home from Little League saying Little League sucks. I thought, Well, yeah, you suck at baseball. The reason it's hard to find good people is people don't know how to do interviews. So train yourself on how to do an interview. One of

**Jacob 48:49**

The things I've always been fascinated by, and I'm sure you've seen this in a lot of organizations, too, is you go into an organization, it's the same company, same culture, same values, and you have leaders there who everybody loves and admires and respects. And then you have other leaders there who everybody hates and wants to run away from. But it's the same company and the same values and the same culture in that also oftentimes shocks me it's like how are both of you here?

**Cameron 49:13**

It usually goes up to a role or two above them. And you have some politics at that point where the leader is more concerned about politics and themselves and they are about the group of the whole organization. So they won't actually get rid of the people they might be a good political people for them. Or they might be the yes men that they need or they don't want to ruffle any feathers and which sucks. But yeah, when when you can find a team that is operating really well almost like a football team, where all of the players are looking out for each other. You know, the guy who plays defensive line cares about the Chicago Bears as much as the quarterback as much as the off ride. They're not worried about the defensive team or the offensive team or special teams. They care about the whole Chicago Bears now. That's what you need to build a great organization is the team that's looking out for the team. versus looking out for themselves.

**Jacob 50:02**

Okay, a couple minutes left, you've obviously coached a lot of business leaders. What is a quality or characteristic that you've identified in business leaders that hurts them the most that keeps them from achieving that success that they should be achieving? And flipside of that, is there a quality or characteristic that isn't that these business leaders successful ones have that helps them the most, if you were to pick one, which

**Cameron 50:29**

I'm going to start with that one first, the traits of business leaders that help them the most and and that helps them are, the best business leaders are the ones that are constantly focused on growing people growing their skills, and growing their confidence and growing their skills and growing their confidence. So that I visualize a leader, a manager, as someone who's climbing up two ladders that are right beside each other, and they've got their left foot and their left hand climbing up the skills ladder, and they have the right foot and right hand climbing up the confidence ladder. The best leaders are constantly growing skills and competence skills and competence skills and competence is there to support them and align them and grow them. So so your cedars,

**Jacob 51:09**

it's one of those skills, we're talking about skills for like if I'm a leader, my skills, my self confidence,

**Cameron 51:15**

yeah, I want I want if I'm the Vice President, my job is to try to grow every other person that reports to me to grow their skill set, okay, right. So they are better in their job. It's not to tell them what to do. It's not to hold them accountable what to do is to train them on interviewing and train them on coaching and train them on delegation and train them on time management, train them on conflict management, train them on one on one meetings, train them on delegation, so they're better effective leaders, okay, and then cheer them on and praise them and thank them and say, great job on the core values so that you're stirring that energy level up, versus telling them what to do and holding them accountable.

**Jacob 51:52**

Okay, so the skills and confidence is not my skills and confidence as a leader is other people's skill and confidence.

**Cameron 51:58**

Well, it's both you want to grow your own, but you also want to grow everyone below you. So I flipped the org chart upside down. I put the CEO at the bottom supporting the VP supporting the managers who are supporting the customers, okay, my job is to support my team to coach them, to grow them, to align them, not to tell them what to do and hold them accountable. I hire people that know what to do. I hire people that hold themselves accountable. I hire people that are inspired by the vision and excited about where we're going. And when they think I'm there to help them. They're excited about that.

**Jacob 52:27**

Okay, so skills and confidence if you like skills, a lot of people can grasp skills, right? learning new things, applying the things that you learn, like that tends to be I feel more conceptual, tangible, confidence, though. I've interviewed a lot of people I'm sure you have as well. They struggle with imposter syndrome, or they don't have that confidence. How do you cultivate or create that?

**Cameron 52:51**

I think at the end of the day, we are all 16 year olds trapped in adult bodies. Right? You're the 16 year old Jacob.

**Jacob 52:59**

Don't say that. That's a terrifying visual.

**Cameron 53:01**

But it's so true, right? The stuff that made you nervous at 16 makes you nervous today, the stuff that excited you at 16 excites you today. We're still starving for praise. If I said Jace Jacob. I do a lot of media interviews, you ask really great questions. That makes you feel good. If I say Jacob, it sounds

like you read vivid vision. You're excited about vivid vision. And I'm really glad that you got into that book that makes you feel good. If I say Jacob, I love this piece of software you're using it's better than zoom that. It takes no time for a leader to say those things. But the job of the leader is to find opportunities to praise people and say things of gratitude and to say hey, there's stuff you're doing well, and that feeds their energy. Yeah, so during Starbucks tenure, there's only ever been four CEOs at Starbucks, Howard Schultz, Howard B har Oren Smith, and I can't remember who the current CEO is. But when Howard Bihar was CEO, he used to spend two hours every single Friday hand writing thank you notes to people. And his assistant would put on his desk a list of thank you notes to write with a stack of thank you notes already pre addressed, and it would be store number 112. Great job on hitting your frappuccino goal of the year. You know, Marriott store number 7200. Great job at being with us for four years, you know, thanks for your energy, Howard.

**Jacob 54:21**

Kevin Johnson, by the way, just looked it up.

**Cameron 54:23**

Steve Johnson.

**Jacob 54:24**

No. Kevin Johnson, Kevin Johnson

**Cameron 54:26**

Right. So So what's interesting, though, is that Howard, Bihar was spending two hours every single Friday which is 5% of his week. On a 40 hour week, he's spending two hours that he's spending 5% of every single week hand writing notes to people and saying thank you. Now imagine if a CEO or a team leader or a business leader, we often tell our people where they're screwing up what they're doing wrong, set another goal push this out faster, we need to get this done more. What we need to do is praise them twice as often as we give them new things to do. We need to say thank you twice as often as we give them stuff to fix. We need to say great job on things twice as often as we show them things they have to get better at. So it's hard because we're often often driving to that horizon. And we often forget to say the thank you and forget to do the praise. Yeah. So the more that you The more you stoked, you know, the CEOs job is to be the chief energizing officer.

**Jacob 55:23**

Hmm. I like that chief energizing officer. Well, to wrap up, the kind of the flip side of that question was we talked about things that make successful leaders, what have you seen as far as the most dense, detrimental thing that hurts leaders from achieving their true potential,

**Cameron 55:39**

it tends to be that the business leader is so focused on their own silo and their own business area, and not on the good of the company, and the good of the team that they end up creating silos, politics and turf wars, as Pat Iencioni talked about. And because they're so focus like that, let's say the head of marketing is so obsessed with marketing, they forget that the entire company is their focus. And it

actually hurts the whole company, and it hurts their team. If they're defending their team, and they're fighting for their team. They're missing the point they need to be fighting for the whole company. Got it?

**Jacob 56:12**

I've heard that. And I've also heard ego is a pretty dangerous one, too.

**Cameron 56:16**

Right? Yeah. The enemy right on holiday.

**Jacob 56:19**

Yeah, yeah, exactly. Well, we have been talking about all sorts of fascinating topics, unfortunately, near the end of our time, but I wanted to ask you where people can go to learn more about you, where they can go to grab your book, you mentioned a course a couple times. So any resources that you can mention for people to check out, please feel free to do so?

**Cameron 56:40**

Sure. Yeah. I've written five books now. So I have vivid vision, double double meeting suck, free PR, and that I co authored the Miracle Morning for entrepreneurs with Hal Elrod. My course is called invest in your leaders, they just go to invest in your leaders calm. The CEO, Alliance. If any organizations are greater than 5 million in revenue, they should get their second in command to join the CEO Alliance. We've got members from 17 countries. All of my books are available on Amazon, audible and iTunes. And then I have a podcast that people should listen and check out. It's called the second command, podcast and we only interview CEOs never the CEO.

**Jacob 57:14**

Very cool. Well, Cameron, thank you so much for taking time out of your day to join me conversations. And fascinating. I mean, I learned a lot I hope people learn a lot as well. And they can apply a lot of the things we talked about in their corporations and inside of their lives as well. So thank you.

**Cameron 57:28**

Thanks, Jacob. Appreciate it.

**Jacob 57:30**

Thanks again for tuning into the show. And don't forget to go to [six leadership trends.com](http://sixleadershiptrends.com) to grab a copy of my brand new PDF, which is going to walk you through the six trends that are shaping leadership and what it means to be a leader. And it will also give you action items for what you should be doing for each one of these six trends to adapt and evolve so that you can be a better leader in the future of work. Again, that is six leadership trends calm, you can either spell out the number six in the URL, or just use the number six in the URL. They will both take you to the same place. Thanks again for tuning in.