

# VISION

It used to take the giants of the pharmaceutical world at least five years to deliver a vaccine. Yet when the world was struck by COVID-19, Pfizer managed to deliver a vaccine in just eight months. Meanwhile, others such as Moderna, Johnson & Johnson, and Astra Zeneca demonstrated similarly extraordinary feats of mobilisation.

The people who achieved this embraced techniques that we at VISION recognise and have been helping clients with for years. We call it 21st-century mobilisation, and it incorporates a particularly powerful skill that Aristotle called *phronesis*, otherwise known as practical wisdom.

In this invaluable deep dive into 21st-century mobilisation strategies, we share insights that will enable your organisation to achieve what the guardians of business-as-usual will tell you is impossible.

## **21<sup>st</sup>-century mobilisation**

*Transform your business with extraordinary pace*

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# The pharmaceutical giants who achieved the impossible

The pandemic crisis opened our eyes to new opportunities that, previously, would have been dismissed as impossible.

Take the pharmaceutical industry, renowned for its commitment to scientific caution, steadfast adherence to long-established processes, and a meticulous but slow regulatory approval process. This is an industry that takes at least five years to deliver a vaccine. Yet, faced by the challenge of COVID-19, Pfizer, Moderna, Johnson & Johnson, and Astra Zeneca abandoned business-as-usual for a much more powerful form of management and delivered a vaccine in less than a year.

In return for this commitment to mobilisation, it's expected that Astra Zeneca will create revenues of approximately \$2 billion in 2021, while that figure may rise to around \$20 billion for Pfizer and Moderna.<sup>1</sup> Astra Zeneca and Johnson & Johnson have pledged to deliver the vaccines on a not-for-profit basis until the pandemic is over; yet, the substantial community goodwill reflected by the success of the vaccine developers is likely to bring benefits to shareholders for years to come.

Along the way, the complementary regulatory, manufacturing and logistics partners for the industry were compelled to re-think how they did their work. They too responded with similar transformations. Manufacturing alliances across geographies and competitive boundaries were formed, and long-practiced manufacturing processes were redesigned to deliver the products faster and cost-effectively without sacrificing quality. Logistics companies from FedEx to UPS to DHL and Amazon designed new ways to store, transport, and deliver a sophisticated and delicate product to city centres and rural townships with exceptional speed and timeliness.

Just about every company in the COVID-19 vaccine supply chain developed new ways of working at pace, in parallel, in collaboration, and with shared risk. They increased revenue and profits. And although this mobilisation took place in emergency circumstances, they will adopt many of the elements for a new business-as-usual.



**If a giant company with a storied history such as Pfizer can produce such results by refusing to be slaves to business-as-usual practices and instead finding new ways of mobilising resources with agility and speed, surely we can too?**

Business leaders across industries and their boards are asking what the examples of Pfizer, Moderna, Johnson & Johnson, and Astra Zeneca mean for them.

If a giant company with a storied history such as Pfizer can produce such results by refusing to be slaves to business-as-usual practices and instead finding new ways of mobilising resources with agility and speed, surely we can too?

We believe you can.

Why? Because in the innovation, production, and delivery efforts of the pharma giants and their partners, we recognise a new approach to mobilisation for the 21st-century rooted in *phronesis*.

*Phronesis* is Aristotle's term for practical wisdom. This is wisdom that comes from cultivating virtues as you gain experience in a community or organisation. Such cultivation encourages the dispositions and habits within you so that you do the right thing when called on by events.

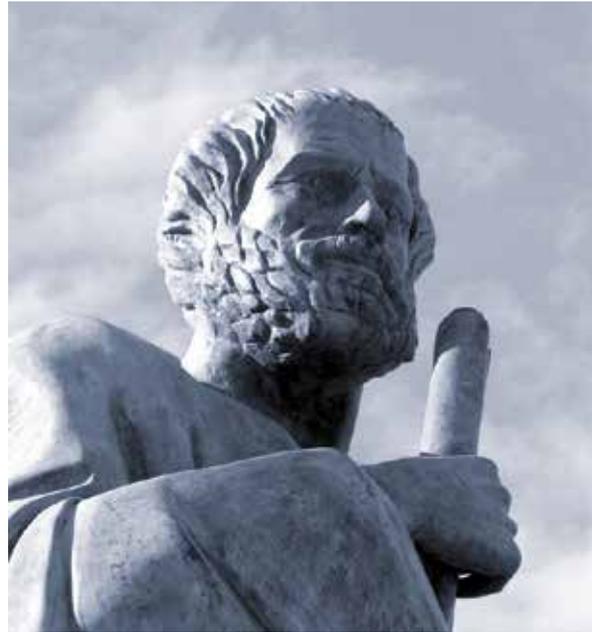
A *phronemos* acts courageously when the community needs courage, wisely when it needs wisdom, and justly when it needs justice. The *phronemos* famously adjudicates when a situation calls for a choice between conflicting virtues – should I be brave or just? In short, the *phronemos* does the right thing at the right time in the right way, and we admire the *phronemos* for it.<sup>2</sup> When CEO Albert Bourla said Pfizer would target developing a vaccine within six months, and certainly have one within a year, he acted as a *phronemos*. He made the first big call perfectly.

We know the importance of practical wisdom at VISION. Since 1984, we've been one of the world's leading mobilisers of companies. Mobilisation, as a style of management for the 21st-century, is necessary whenever organisations need to make dramatic changes fast.

The speedy, efficient mobilisation of resources achieved during the pandemic crisis has raised awareness of what mobilisation can do today. Which company wouldn't like to work more quickly and efficiently as Pfizer did? Which company would not want an improved business-as-usual?

After Albert Bourla said Pfizer would deliver a vaccine within a year at most, the company went on to achieve this extraordinary feat in just eight months. The techniques that Bourla spells out in his *Harvard Business Review* article are largely the same as those that VISION has been bringing to clients before the pandemic and throughout it.<sup>3</sup>

**The phronemos does the right thing at the right time in the right way.**



Some of the elements of mobilisation are clear:

- The leader should set a big, broadly compelling, admirable, and motivating goal.
- Workstreams that ordinarily happen sequentially (to reduce financial and operational risk) must be designed to be executed in parallel.
- Work with partners must start immediately before hashing out all the contractual details.
- Everything should be streamlined according to the goal and the satisfaction of the customer (which, in the case of Pfizer, was the patient).

We will explore these and other key techniques in more detail but, before we do, we need to bring out something Bourla leaves out of his clear, crisp, and brief account. Much in Bourla's account was true of 20th-century mobilisation. The difference that comes with 21st-century mobilisation is *phronesis*. If you know that in advance, you will see where Bourla hints at it. It clearly made a difference at Pfizer. So we will quickly set out the difference between what we call 20th-century and 21st-century mobilisation.

It's also important to point out that management by mobilisation is one of four very powerful and contrasting management orientations that are appropriate in different circumstances. We'll explain that in more detail later too.

## What is 20th century mobilisation?

The term 'mobilisation' became popular in the 1850s when it referred to collecting, training, supplying, and delivering military conscripts to their units. Then, in the early 20th century, the philosopher Ernst Jünger realised that the victorious countries of World War I had succeeded because they had organised as much of their manufacturing, commercial and civic activity as possible to serve the war effort. He called this 'total mobilisation' and said it meant that even houseworkers with their sewing machines would be playing an active part in supporting the cause.<sup>4</sup>

As the century developed, and organisations needed to make deep, fast, changes, they too mobilised. This started by focusing people on single, glamorous objectives. They cut through bureaucracy, eliminated middle management, and organised businesses around projects driven by lean, cross-functional teams. Mobilisation was mostly calculation. Consider Wal-Mart's supply chain management.

Everyone took on the ethos of a doer. Mobilisation managers had to know at all times whether their organisation was focused on achieving the preeminent goal. That meant spending time in the field checking in on people and customers.

These managers still needed to carry out planning, organisation, and coordination but they no longer did it through reflection on a mountain top. They did it while sitting among the doers and getting feedback right away. As Jünger put it, there are no kings, knights, or even citizens anymore – everyone is a worker.<sup>5</sup>

And finally, mobilisation managers began to use soft power to design ways to channel the instincts of their employees to the behaviours required by the overall objective.

As we're about to explore in much more detail, 21st-century mobilisation of human resources requires a far more nuanced touch that calls on the ethical practical wisdom of phronesis. These are the skills that Albert Bourla has been practising at Pfizer, and that we can help your organisation develop.

## Mobilisation in Practice:

A newly privatised gas distributor was in the bottom third of performance tracked by the regulator and its own investors. The executive team had recently changed, and the board set a mission to transform field operational performance within two years, reduce OpEx by £80 million, achieve regulatory performance metrics in the top third, and simultaneously raise workforce morale.

Within the first 12-week period in one of its toughest regions, VISION's practices led to a doubling in repair team productivity with a clearly visible boost in mood and morale even as staff reductions were implemented.

Over the next 12 months, new practices were mobilised across half the company's regions, the productivity improvements sustained, and a new business-as-usual contributed to savings of £10 million a year.

Over two years, the company's EBITA increased almost 26%, operating profits increased almost 27%, and the company moved into the top third for key performance metrics used by the regulator.

The sound of culture change (from front line staff):

*"If there is one thing I have taken on board, it's the importance of team building and relationships."*



# Meet the great simplifiers, pacesetters and mood managers

21st-century mobilisation revolves around simplification, pacesetting, resolving, coaching, trust building, and mood management. And these are the areas for which a 21st-century mobiliser needs *phronesis*.

## Simplification

21st-century mobilisers must be great simplifiers. They strip everything inessential from a process. In doing so, processes become more robust, and people engaged on the frontlines understand the whole much better.

When VISION mobilised COVID-19 vaccinations through general practitioners, our senior mobilisers decided very quickly that they did not need to make changes to the main IT system. Instead, they could run the program on the basis of phone calls and spreadsheets. When ransomware attacked the main healthcare IT systems, our spreadsheets remained untouched.

Indeed, to keep things simple, mobilisers frequently insist on figuring out how to run a process manually and then develop automation and other IT simply to support or later replace that manual system. Thus, they avoid attempts to design IT systems to cover all or even most contingencies. Designing to cover too many contingencies makes the system and processes vulnerable.

But it's not only in IT where simplification drives process. Mobilisers simplify contacts with outside stakeholders. They are not connectors. They only invite key people to meetings so that authoritative decisions get made. They do not include everyone who might have something to add.

Exposed to VISION mobilisation practices, one CEO remarked that he could not believe the amount of time people waste in his organisation where all the top managers expect to be invited to every meeting.

Of course, unless mobilisers are careful, they can be seen to exclude. That's where their 21st-century *phronesis* has to guide them.

## Pacesetting

21st-century mobilisation managers must develop the practical wisdom for setting the pace of action in the field. When a mobiliser manager checks in with teams or customers in the field, the manager asks about how the work is going and whether it's on schedule. If it is, the manager brainstorms on how to make it go even faster. As such, the manager is setting a fast pace by regularly bringing his or her team's attention to how productive they are. The team observes the manager in motion and is drawn to imitate the level of energy, urgency, speed, and rhythm in their work. Of course, if the work is not on schedule, the manager resolves the issue.

## Resolving

If the work is not on schedule or quality is low, the mobiliser manager either takes on the role of a resolver or appoints a resolver. This figure identifies the people who need to come together, requesting with urgency that they assemble for a coming-to-resolution meeting. In this meeting, the team agrees on and commits to a resolution or at least the next steps they will take to achieve a speedy resolution. In most cases, low quality or low speed comes from weak coordination among people or units, and resolvers are experts at addressing this. Still, in all cases, resolvers are mobilising for pace. That is fundamental.

## Building trust

21st-century mobilisation managers must also develop the practical wisdom of building trust rapidly. To do that they must consciously cultivate certain admirable virtues as well as their expression. In their work with customers and teams, mobilisers will have to show the virtues of relentlessness, honesty, directness, openness, justice, and probably generosity.

In dealing with suppliers, customers, and other stakeholders, they need to display these virtues as well as their wisdom in making trade-offs and compromises. A mobilisation manager who can display a sample of such virtues in every meeting will build trust with outside stakeholders for the key informal agreements that mobilisation requires.

## Coaching

In checking-in to set the pace, 21st-century mobilisation managers coach employees on how to do better by making direct assessments of what is not working. These managers also accept assessments from their teams and model making adjustments in response to assessment. This form of coaching goes against the grain of most managers, who think making direct assessments regularly will produce a bad mood and poor performance. However, as Netflix and Bridgewater show, such regular coaching and assessment sharing done with phronesis achieves the very opposite.<sup>6</sup>

## Managing moods

Lastly, towards the end of the 20th century, mobilisers used their soft power designing problem sets, meetings, IT, and even buildings to channel common sense. 21st-century mobilisation managers must go beyond that to manage the moods of their team members. VISION mobilisers are well known for asking team members about their moods in each meeting and establishing a mood that ranges between light anxiety over getting the work done to missionary zeal for achieving the goals of the day, month, year and project.

This question about mood plays a useful role in coaching because it shows the manager's sensitivity to the employee's welfare and interest in listening to how the employee feels. Of course, the interest must be genuine. And when it is genuine, simply asking about the mood is usually enough to snap a team member out of a bad mood. Poor moods leave people feeling alone, and the interest of someone else in those moods reduces that feeling. And when people are in a shared mood, they see that things matter in the same way, understand each other, and more easily share a common view of the right thing to do. Of course, people can also think beyond their mood – and have to if things are not going well.

## Mobilisation in Practice:

**A FTSE-100 energy company was faced with a radically changed regulatory environment: its centrepiece, a new, customer-centric price-control model, that had senior management wondering: how they could influence total expenditure (TOTEX), reduce service interruptions, raise customer satisfaction, satisfy the regulator, and meet shareholder expectations?**

**Within 18 months, VISION designed and rolled out a new TOTEX-based Value Management Model, one of the first in the electricity industry, and it delivered bottom-line results that took the division from a projected loss of £1.2 million a month to savings of £9 million in twelve months and £100 million over eight years.**



# 10 STEPS to making 21st-century mobilisation work

## 1 Set a big, glamorous goal

Albert Bourla set the goal of developing the COVID-19 vaccine in six months and definitely within 12. Meanwhile, VISION consultants working recently with a client on construction projects set the goal of getting to site in half the time and at 30% lower costs.

Goals such as these must appeal to everyone involved. People must be able to realise that, if they achieve the goal, they will have done something that they can talk about proudly in their wider community.

It's obvious how this worked in the COVID-19 example, but how about in the construction example? In that case, the public were suffering because key services were being disrupted by the delay to projects, and carbon-neutral goals were being missed. Achieving the goal would therefore be a source of immense pride to all involved and, importantly, while very ambitious, it didn't seem quite beyond the range of possibility.

The practical wisdom it takes to craft such a goal is not new. 20th-century senior managers had to do it. But 21st-century mobilisation management requires this leadership wisdom to flow down through the ranks. Middle managers will succeed only if they request promises of their teams that have the same character: promises that just about seem possible and generate immense pride because their fulfilment demonstrates exceptional skill.

Simple examples would be going from two completed jobs per week to three. That can be done by sharpening up planning and preparation, making sure that all the required equipment is ready, and then making a fast change if something goes wrong.

**21st-century mobilisation management requires this leadership wisdom to flow down through the ranks.**



## 2 Work backwards from the end-customer's interest

In the Pfizer case, the care for the patient's health meant that patient safety was designed into the project and maintained, even as Pfizer took other financial and operational risks for fast mobilisation. VISION recommends that all mobilisation planning proceeds by working one's way back from the customer-desired end.

For instance, if the customer wants a certain project completed within a year, then start with that timeline and work backwards with a co-located, cross-functional team to find a way to make it happen without putting the customer at risk. This is 20th-century mobilisation wisdom. However, VISION recommends enhancing it by breaking the steps to satisfying the customer into commitments held by individuals, and then managing that map of commitments to ensure they're fulfilled at their promised times. Focus on people and commitments, rather than on tasks to be performed.

Also, by having such commitment maps, the mobilising managers can know exactly which teams are serving the main objective and how, and then which teams are exempted and serve other purposes.

### 3 Reduce work with bureaucratic stakeholders

Famously, Pfizer did not accept funding from the US government during its race to develop the COVID-19 vaccine. The paperwork and double-checking would have slowed the process down. To combat bureaucracy, 21st-century mobilisers seek to put in place risk and reward contracts wherever possible. Instead of a fixed cost for certain services, these new contracts oblige project sponsors to cover the basic costs necessary to get the work done. However, the suppliers forego any profits until the project is complete, at which point they share in the total profit accumulation.

One important way of receiving trust is to extend it.

### 4 Build enough trust to begin work before contracts are agreed

This element is a big order. Pfizer was able to do this with its partner BioNTech.<sup>7</sup> Building trust with employees will require regular direct coaching, mutual sharing of assessments and, minimally, a display of the virtues of diligence, honesty, justice, generosity. In our experience, once those virtues (plus openness and commitment) are on display to suppliers in a contract negotiation, that negotiation need not be complete for work to start.

Also, for sufficient trust to start work without a complete contract, the supplier has to see that the project sponsor's manager is absolutely committed to the success of the project and open to hearing and adjusting on the basis of the criticism of the potential supplier. One important way of receiving trust is to extend it. If a supplier complains about something, the mobiliser manager should tell the supplier that, if the supplier comes up with a solution, it will be embraced. It takes wisdom to know when goodwill is ripe for this kind of exchange.

### 5 Change sequential work to parallel work

Obviously, there is significant operational and financial risk in starting one phase if an organisation cannot be sure that the previous phase will succeed. However, parallel work need not always be so risky. Sometimes a site surveyor can do other work that would normally come later and do so with high confidence that the site will be good to go. Frequently, the earlier planning work with co-located, multi-disciplinary teams reveals numerous opportunities for low-risk parallel work. Also, once people get into that mindset, they might see something that indicates another team has fallen behind and then just leap in and complete the lagging work as well as fulfilling their main responsibility.

In its mobilisation, Pfizer tested vaccine candidates in parallel, conducted large animal and human tests in parallel (with permission), conducted phase two and phase three tests in parallel, struck agreements with other pharmaceutical companies to share manufacturing before knowing what that would entail, and then, the biggest risk of all, once Pfizer decided its final candidate, the company spent the money to produce 1.5 million doses during the final trial. If the trial had failed, Pfizer would have had to destroy the doses.<sup>8</sup>



## 6 Hold hyper-frequent operational meetings

Mobilisation requires a fast rhythm where, crucially, no one can fall into old disciplinary practices without the big goal in sight. That is why the mobiliser's 21st-century practical wisdom requires constantly checking in on where the project is, letting everyone know where it is, and asking probing questions in the field about how the speed and quality could be improved.

### Mobilisers cannot be distant. They have to know the business.

In doing this, managers are standing shoulder to shoulder with their teams as doers. They are resolving. They are coaching. They are intervening in moods. Mobilisers cannot be distant. They have to know the business.

Through doing this with their team, mobilisers are also setting the pace. Furthermore, mobilisers who constantly probe, discover problems early on. Frequently, people want to give themselves time to work through a problem and only bring it up when they think that they cannot achieve a solution. That is too late in 21st-century mobilisation.

How fast can a mobiliser press a team to work? How hard does a mobiliser probe? How quickly does a resolving mobiliser determine whether a breakdown is an issue requiring better coordination or requiring innovation? How direct are the assessments of the mobiliser in coaching? How does the intervention in mood take place? The answers to these questions come from the development of the mobiliser's practical wisdom.



## 7 Insist on regular innovation from cross-disciplinary teams

Teams do better when they face a regular expectation for innovation. The managing mobiliser plays a critical role here, probing frequently, at least weekly, to see if someone on the team has come across an idea for how things could be done better. It's critical to do this in mobilisation because, in the flurry of activity, insights can get lost.

The 21st-century mobiliser has to develop the skill for collecting these rare ideas. We have seen numerous styles – from aggressive and insistent to sweet and nurturing – that work for this. But whichever style the mobiliser has, the mobiliser must not relent.

The ad hoc innovations that result from finding such ideas are one of the most important elements of 21st-century mobilisations. One of our favourite examples arose when ISG, the contractor responsible for constructing the velodrome for the London Olympics, came up with the idea of replacing the proposed steel roof with a cable net roof. The change saved significant amounts of time and cost.<sup>9</sup>

## 8 Establish a can-do, mission-driven culture

The most important practices for maintaining zeal are regular, almost constant reporting of where teams and the overall organisation are in fulfilling their commitments.

Of course, digital media are great for this. If everyone can see how well the organisation, team, and individuals are doing in meeting promises by looking at a handheld screen or large screens in work rooms and cafeterias, that is wonderful. But VISION mobilisers achieve much the same result with white boards in meeting rooms. The boards list key indicators such as jobs completed on the day and for the week.

This type of reporting evinces two important characteristics of the organisational mood of zeal, where everything matters only so far as it pertains to achieving the big goal. First, blunt talking is essential. To see this at its best and most articulate, read Warren Buffet's annual reports to shareholders. He simply says what he and his organisation did right and what they did wrong. This sunshine is incredibly refreshing in a world of defensive corporate communications.

Second, accepting accountability and holding others accountable for their commitments is essential. Mobilisers and their teams make promises to each other and senior managers. The mobilisers track the promises, check in regularly (as we have described), and make assessments regarding promise fulfillment.

Still, maintaining an organisational mood of zeal requires one more element, one whose underlying practice we have already described. Zeal requires a sense of urgency and a sense of anxiety that the team may not be moving fast enough. The pace-setting practice we have already described of regular meetings that move quickly to resolution will instil a sense of urgency.

However, note that large amounts of practical wisdom are important here. When a team feels too much urgency or too much anxiety, it falls into zeal's antithetical mood of resignation, a hopelessness that the bold, glamorous goal is unachievable. And teams will occasionally fall into this negative mood anyway, simply on account of weariness. Practically wise 21st-century mobilisers will tune in and draw teams out by showing a recovery result here and then there.

## 9 Take wise financial risks to intensify commitment

Pfizer's Albert Bourla writes eloquently here:

*On March 16 our top executives met and agreed that it was time to go all in on developing this vaccine with BioNTech – along with treatments for COVID-19 – even if that meant spending as much as \$3 billion. For context, the typical vaccine development program can take up to 10 years and cost anywhere from \$1 billion to more than \$2 billion. We did not want our decision to be driven by the need for financial returns alone. Saving lives – as many and as soon as possible – would be the top priority.<sup>10</sup>*

No doubt sceptics will want to chime in that Bourla and his top team were aware of the negative publicity around pharmaceutical companies and of the public relations and political advantages that would come from success. Granted. But shooting for a vaccine in six months and promising to achieve it in less than a year and spending \$1 billion more than vaccines normally cost is a huge and irreversible commitment of resources.

Whether Bourla and his team could hope for an upside matters little. He and his team took a risk that went way beyond normal. They risked the reputation of Pfizer. They risked their own reputations for fiduciary responsibility. It sounds good to say that they want to save as many lives as possible, but if the risk taking did not have a minimally positive result – a loss of only \$1 billion – then they would have risked Pfizer's ability to save lives going into the future. Pfizer could have lost a full \$3 billion if the team did not have a successful vaccine. This kind of moral risk-taking is part of showing the zeal of being all in and makes all those involved feel complicity with the risk-taking, mobilising leaders. Courage is an aspect of zeal, and moral risk-taking requires and displays courage.



## 10 Treat people as noble missionaries

In Pfizer's case, Bourla wrote: "Without the tremendous sacrifices of team members who gave up their weekends and holiday, went months on end without seeing their families, and worked harder and more hours than they ever had before, we never would have succeeded."<sup>11</sup>

VISION's mobilisers have seen this response again and again. In our experience, this behaviour shows that many people crave noble missions. As in the Pfizer case, such missions can prove more profoundly satisfying than weekends, holidays, or even regular time at home with the family. However, helping people feel the nobility of the mission requires more than having the goal emblazoned in large type on every screen and more than senior managers in town halls celebrating progress. It requires treating team members as admirable and as able to surprise by going beyond themselves at any moment.

**Helping people feel the nobility of the mission requires more than having the goal emblazoned in large type on every screen.**

Mobilisers must see everyone they work with day in and day out with wonder. Such a style of treatment is hard. Mobilisers set the pace, look to move even faster, probe for weaknesses in performance or promise fulfilment, give direct assessments, intervene in negative moods, and constantly inform of progress or its lack. These actions are all risky if the goal is to inspire a sense of shared nobility and wonder in each other's capacities.

**Mobilisers must see everyone they work with day in and day out with wonder.**

In short, while leaders are taking large-scale moral risks with money, mobilisers through the ranks are taking moral risks in the questioning and coaching. Mobilisers constantly face the risk of raising their team members' righteous anger – 'if you do not see me as I see me, then you are simply a bully or perhaps racist, sexist, classist, or gender biased.' Again, it requires the practical wisdom of the mobiliser to bring with both challenge and wonder, while preventing a backlash.

## When is 21st-century mobilisation appropriate?

21st-century mobilisation focuses on accomplishing a relatively narrow, highly ambitious goal quickly. It's appropriate when managers need to change an organisation's way of working rapidly and when the management team knows exactly the outcome it wants. For other situations, we see three alternative management orientations with which VISION can also help you:

### Stakeholder orientation

When a company has a strong competitive advantage and wants to reinforce it by building its brand with various stakeholder communities, we recommend the stakeholder management orientation, pioneered by R. Edward Freeman.<sup>12</sup>

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### High-trust orientation

Although originally developed for large capital projects, this high-trust, close-collaboration approach is ideal for any large venture that requires many different suppliers and technologies, and years to complete.. It draws on a combination of Integrated Project Delivery and VISION's own Commitment-based Management.<sup>TM 13</sup>

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### Transient-advantage orientation

When you manage in a fast-moving marketplace where new entrants, substitutes and technologies arise daily, we recommend the transient-advantage orientation, pioneered by Rita McGrath.<sup>14</sup>

This approach requires acting like a venture capitalist or investment manager. Managers develop a diverse array of potential competitive advantages, purchase more of what is working and quickly sell what is not. Such management cannot allow any emotional, passionate attachment to causes.

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## Bringing it all to life

Mobilisation stands distinct from the stakeholder, high-trust and transient-advantage orientations through its emphasis on speed and streamlining. This is a form of management characterised by urgency, zeal, and fast-paced, frequent meetings, including progress checks, coaching, assessment sharing, and the management of individual and group moods.

As with capital projects, mobilisers cultivate high levels of trust so that work can proceed in parallel work streams. But with trust-building and urgency comes a higher degree of moral risk-taking. Mobilising leaders show that they are all in with their financial risks. Mobilising managers take similar moral risks every day in pushing the limits on speed, productivity, coaching directness, and interventions on mood.

If stakeholder managers are servant leaders and large project managers are community builders, mobilisation managers are like small business owners. They know what they are mobilising as if it were the business they had built themselves. And, each day, they bring the zeal of small entrepreneurial owners who see themselves reflected in their businesses and feel the anxiety of knowing that they have to meet payrolls at the end of the week.

If your organisation needs to move fast to meet a clear objective, and you know the resources necessary to achieve it, 21st-century mobilisation is what you need.

**Whichever emerging approach is right for you, VISION can help bring it to life.**

## Notes

- 1 From Pfizer to Moderna: who's making millions from COVID-19 vaccines? *The Guardian*, 2021
- 2 Haridimos Tsoukas, "Strategy and virtue: developing strategy-as-practice through virtue ethics," *Strategic Organization*, 16 (2017): pp. 323-351.
- 3 Albert Bourla, "How We Did It," *Harvard Business Review* 33.3 (2021): p. 34.
- 4 Jünger, pp. 124 -126
- 5 Reed Hastings and Erin Meyer, *No Rules Rules: Netflix and the Culture of Reinvention* (New York: NY: Penguin, 2020), pp. 39-53.
- 6 Jünger, p. 128.
- 7 Bourla, p. 39.
- 8 Bourla, p. 37.
- 9 Andrew Davies, Mark Dodgson, and David M. Gann, "Innovation and Flexibility in Megaprojects: A New Delivery Model," in *The Oxford Handbook of Megaproject Management* ed. Bent Flyvbjerg (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2017), p. 329.
- 10 Andrew Davies, Mark Dodgson, and David M. Gann, "Innovation and Flexibility in Megaprojects: A New Delivery Model," in *The Oxford Handbook of Megaproject Management* ed. Bent Flyvbjerg (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2017), p. 329.
- 11 Bourla, p. 38..
- 12 R. Edward Freeman, Jeffrey S. Harrison, Andrew C. Wicks, Bidham Parmar, and Simone de Colle *Stakeholder Theory: The State of the Art* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010).
- 13 Commitment-based Management™
- 14 Rita McGrath, Transient Advantage, *Harvard Business Review* 91.6 (2013): 62-70.

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If you would like to discover more about 21st-century mobilisation and *phronesis* or the other three key management orientations, we can help. Drop us an email at [phronesis@vision.com](mailto:phronesis@vision.com) or visit [www.vision.com](http://www.vision.com) where you can access more information including our VISION Works podcast series.

VISION is an international consulting organisation that enables businesses to transform their operational practices, leadership, and culture for outstanding long-term benefits. One of the qualities that makes us different is that our thinking is deeply rooted in the works of the great philosophers – profound wisdom that is all too often overlooked by modern-day recipe followers of the consultancy world. The value of that wisdom is demonstrated time and time again in the work that we deliver for our clients, who are often facing hugely complex challenges and difficulties.

## VISION

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