

The sights of leadership

[Business](#), [Leadership](#)



Every leader must master three aspects of visionary sight – 1. Hindsight: The ability to reflect and learn from the past 2. Insight: The ability to interpret and respond to the present 3. Foresight: The ability to predict and prepare for the future But while every leader must operate in all three aspects of vision, which focus they rely on most will have far-reaching implications for their lives and organisations they build. Which focus do you favour?

Hindsight Leadership: Tends to emphasise the value of experience and evidence.

They look at the future through the eyes of the past. Like a lawyer they tend to look for a precedent for every decision. They're hoping it's true that "history repeats itself". Although we absolutely must reflect on the past and learn the lessons it offers us, we cannot afford to become overly focused on the past in our leadership any more than we can afford to drive whilst staring in the rear vision mirror. **Insight Leadership:** Tends to emphasise the value of tactics and reality. They look at the future as an extrapolation of current events and trends.

Finely tuned to what is happening around them, they hope that by responding correctly now they will experience success in the future.

Although they're not spending a lot of time looking backwards, they're also not spending much time looking ahead. The focus becomes about where we are now and what step we could take next. For this leader the old adage not to "climb the ladder only to find it's leaning across the wrong wall" contains an important warning. **Foresight Leadership:** Tends to emphasise possibilities and innovation.

They look at the future as uncharted territory or a clean slate. Although they reflect on the past and respond to the present, they are much more concerned with preparing for the future. They drive their organisations with glances in the rear vision mirror and awareness of their surroundings but more than anything else they have clear focus on where they are going and what's coming up on the road ahead. I often advocate insight which is the moment, that is the balancing or transformation point between hindsight and foresight.

Insight is neither hindsight nor foresight. This point is also the birthplace of the two endpoints because what you do at this point of insight becomes your past and determines your future. The problem we so often experience is that we give our attention to the past or the future, at the expense of attending the all-important present moment. We worry about our past or fret about our future and in that process we give up our opportunity to exercise any influence we have in our lives, which can only happen in the here and now