Create Your Vision & Mission Statements

Unleashing the power of purpose

Vision and Mission Statements are the inspiring words chosen by successful leaders to clearly and concisely convey the direction of the organization. By crafting a clear mission statement and vision statement, you can powerfully communicate your intentions and motivate your team or organization to realize an attractive and inspiring common goal for the future.

“Mission Statements” and “Vision Statements” do two distinctly different concepts.

A Mission Statement defines the organization’s purpose and primary objectives. Its prime function is internal – to define the key measure (or measures) of the organization’s success – and its prime audience is the leadership team, employees and shareholders.

Vision Statements also define the organization’s purpose, but this time they do so in terms of the organization’s values rather than bottom line measures (values are beliefs about how things should be done.) The vision statement communicates both the purpose and values of the organization. For employees, it gives direction about how they are expected to behave and inspires them to give their best. Shared with customers, it shapes their understanding of why they should work with you.

First let’s look at creating a mission statement.

Mission Statement Creation

1. To create your mission statement, first identify your organization’s “winning idea”.
   This is the idea or approach that will make your organization stand out from its competitors, and is the reason that customers will come to you and not your competitors, your Unique Selling Proposition.

2. Next identify the key measures of your success. Make sure you select the most important measures (and not too many of them!)

3. Combine your winning idea and success measures into a tangible and measurable goal.

4. Refine the words until you have a concise and precise statement of your mission, which expresses your ideas, measures and desired result.

Example:
Take the example of a produce store whose winning idea is “farm freshness”. The owner identifies two keys measures of her success: freshness and customer satisfaction. She creates her mission statement – which is the action goal that combines the winning idea and measures of success.
The mission statement of Farm Fresh Produce is:

“To become the number one produce store in Main Street by selling the highest quality, freshest farm produce, from farm to customer in under 24 hours on 75% of our range and with 98% customer satisfaction.”

A good mission statement is compelling, exciting, and passionate - but it must come across as real and meaningful. If you are going beyond a page, you may be including detailed objectives and tactics. Stick to broad goals and objectives when preparing a mission statement.

Remember that your mission will likely change over time as your organization and its environment change, so you don’t have to spend forever trying to cover all eventualities in today's statement.

A family should strongly consider developing its own mission statement separate from preparing a mission statement for the family business. Often there are many more emotional issues surrounding the family and its dreams and aspirations. These do not necessarily belong in the business mission statement so capturing them separately might be more effective.

Core Purpose

The core purpose is the reason that the business exists. This core purpose is expressed in a carefully formulated mission statement. Like the core values, the core purpose is unchanging and for many businesss endures for decades or even centuries. This purpose sets the business apart in its industry and provides the direction forward.

The core purpose is an idealistic reason for being. While businesss exist to earn a profit, the profit motive should not be highlighted in the mission statement since it provides little direction to the business’s employees. What is more important is how the business will earn its profit since the “how” is what defines the business.

Initial attempts at stating a core purpose often result in too specific of a statement that focuses on a product or service. To isolate the core purpose, it is useful to ask “why” in response to first-pass, product-oriented mission statements. For example, if a market research business initially states that its purpose is to provide market research data to its customers, asking “why” leads to the fact that the data is to help customers better understand their markets. Continuing to ask “why” may lead to the revelation that the business’s core purpose is to assist its clients in reaching their objectives by helping them to better understand their markets.

The core purpose and values of the business are not selected - they are discovered. The stated ideology should not be a goal or aspiration but rather, it should portray the business as it really is. Any attempt to state a value that is not already held by the business's employees is likely to not be taken seriously.

Mission: Your Mission is the quote that sums up your business and shows how you will reach your vision…and is made up of 4 parts.
1. What type of team do you want to be?

2. What industry sector or business are you in?

3. Who are your customers and what is important to them?

4. What makes you stand out from your competition?

**Your Mission Statement:**

**Vision Statement Creation**

Your Vision Statement will answer the big question - **WHY are you doing what you are doing?** You are doing it so you can create a community that is better than the way things are now. You are doing it so that individuals’ lives will be better. Your Vision Statement will create that context - it will tell where you are heading.

**Vision:** Your vision is the guiding light of your company, something that inspires and enrolls. It must have a higher purpose to it, not just to make more money etc...

1. First identify your organization’s mission. Then uncover the real, human value in that mission.

2. Next, identify what you, your customers and other shareholders value most about how your organization will achieve this mission.

3. Combine your mission and values, and polish the words until you have a vision statement inspiring enough to energize and motivate people inside and outside your organization.

Using the example mission statement developed for Farm Fresh Produce, the owner examines what she, her customers and employees value about the mission.
The four most important things she identifies are: freshness, healthiness, tastiness and “local-ness” of the produce. Here’s the Vision Statement she creates and shares with employees, customers and farmers alike:

“We help the families of Main Town live happier and healthier lives by providing the freshest, tastiest and most nutritious local produce: From local farms to your table in under 24 hours.”

Core Values

The core values are a few values (no more than five) that are central to the firm. Core values reflect the deeply held values of the organization and are independent of the current industry environment and management fads.

One way to determine whether a value is a core value to ask whether it would continue to be supported if circumstances changed and caused it to be seen as a liability. If the answer is that it would be kept, then it is core value. Another way to determine which values are core is to imagine the firm moving into a totally different industry. The values that would be carried with it into the new industry are the core values of the firm.

Core values will not change even if the industry in which the company operates changes. If the industry changes such that the core values are not appreciated, then the firm should seek new markets where its core values are viewed as an asset.

For example, if innovation is a core value but then 10 years down the road innovation is no longer valued by the current customers, rather than change its values the firm should seek new markets where innovation is appreciated.

The following are a few examples of core values:

- Excellence in customer service
- Pioneering (leading edge) technology
- Creativity
- Integrity
- Social responsibility
- Teamwork

Core Values: (Choose your top 2-3 values for each category.)

1. Most important values that you hold to, as the owner

2. Most important values to a customer in dealing with you

3. Most important values that your team have or require
4. Most important values that are core to the business

Your Vision Statement:

Visionary Goals

The visionary goals are the lofty objectives that the business’s management decides to pursue. This vision describes some milestone that the business will reach in the future and may require a decade or more to achieve. In contrast to the core ideology that the business discovers, visionary goals are selected.

These visionary goals are longer term and more challenging than strategic or tactical goals. There may be only a 50% chance of realizing the vision, but the business must believe that it can do so. Collins and Porras describe these lofty objectives as “Big, Hairy, Audacious Goals.” These goals should be challenging enough so that people nearly gasp when they learn of them and realize the effort that will be required to reach them.

Most visionary goals fall into one of the following categories:

- **Target** - quantitative or qualitative goals such as a sales target or Ford’s goal to “democratize the automobile.”
- **Common enemy** - centered on overtaking a specific business such as the 1950’s goal of Philip-Morris to displace RJR.
- **Role model** - to become like another business in a different industry or market. For example, a cycling accessories business might strive to become “the Nike of the cycling industry.”
- **Internal transformation** - especially appropriate for very large corporations. For example, GE set the goal of becoming #1 or 2 in every market it serves.

While visionary goals may require significant stretching to achieve, many visionary companies have succeeded in reaching them. Once such a goal is reached, it needs to be replaced; otherwise, it is unlikely that the organization will continue to be successful. For example, Ford succeeded in placing the automobile within the reach of everyday people, but did not replace this goal with a better one and General Motors overtook Ford in the 1930’s.
Sample Visionary Goats

PEPSI - “Beat Coke”

NIKE - “Crush Reebok”

Wal-Mart (1990) “Become a $125 billion company by the year 2000”

Sony (1950's) "Become the company most known for changing the worldwide poor-quality image of Japanese products"

Boeing (1950) "Become the dominant player in commercial aircraft and bring the world into the jet age"

Ford Motor Company (early 1900's) "Ford will democratize the automobile"

Your Visionary Goats:

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