

VISION, MISSION AND VALUES STATEMENTS

INTRODUCTION



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ADVICE FROM OUTSIDE THE SQUARE

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VISION STATEMENTS

Many people mistake vision statements for mission statements. The Vision describes a future identity and the Mission describes how it will be achieved.

For example, "We help transport goods and people efficiently and cost effectively without damaging environment" is a mission statement. "We are one of the top three transporters of goods and people in Western Australia" is a vision statement. The first talks about *how*, the second about *being*. It is a very concrete and unambiguous identity.

A vision should resonate with all members of the organisation and help them feel proud, excited, and part of something much bigger than themselves. A vision should stretch the organisation's capabilities and image of itself. It gives shape and direction to the organisation's future.

Visions range in length from a couple of words to several pages. We recommend shorter vision statements because people will tend to remember their shorter organisational vision.

The best vision statements describe outcomes that are five to ten years away. The vision statement should focus on the desired outcome at completion date.

Features of an effective vision statement may include:

- Clarity and lack of ambiguity
- Paint a vivid and clear picture, not ambiguous
- Describing a bright future (hope)
- Memorable and engaging expression
- Realistic aspirations, achievable
- Alignment with organisational values and culture, Rational
- Time bound if it talks of achieving any goal or objective



MISSION STATEMENTS

Mission or Purpose is a precise description of what an organisation does. It should describe the business the organisation is in.

The mission statement should be a concise statement of business strategy developed from the *customer's perspective* and it should fit with the vision for the business. The mission should answer three questions:

1. What do we do?
2. How do we do it?
3. For whom do we do it?



VALUES OR CORE VALUES

Mission and Values go hand in hand. To make the mission statement effective, it needs to be aligned with the prevailing culture of its stakeholders, organisation, market and political sphere. A lofty mission statement means nothing if it is not in congruence with the values practiced by the organisation. A statement of values provides guiding principles when ethical issues related to realising the Vision, and undertaking the Mission, arise.

Values are traits or qualities that are considered worthwhile; they represent an organisation's highest priorities and deeply held driving forces.

Value statements define how people want to behave with each other in the organisation. They are statements about how the organisation will value customers, suppliers, and the internal community. Value statements describe actions which are the living enactment of the fundamental values held by most individuals within the organisation.



DEVELOPING A VISION STATEMENT

Developing a vision statement can be culture-specific, i.e., participants may use methods ranging from highly analytical and rational to highly creative and divergent, e.g., focused discussions, divergent experiences around daydreams, sharing stories, etc.

We suggest a start by describing your organisation at the end of its journey or at least in 5 to 10 years' time – what do you want it to be, how do you want it to look and feel?

- Start with words and phrases that evoke the feelings you want to describe the organisation
- Put these together into a paragraph describing the organisation at that time.

Summarize Your Vision in a Powerful Phrase

Summarise your vision using a powerful phrase in the first paragraph of your vision statement. Capturing the essence of your vision using a simple memorable phrase can greatly enhance the effectiveness of your vision statement. This phrase will serve as a trigger to the rest of the vision in the mind of everyone that reads it.

Take for instance Microsoft's vision of "A personal computer in every home running Microsoft software." This simple yet very powerful phrase can be used throughout the organisation (hallways, internal web pages, plaques, etc.) to remind everyone of the vision.

If you are having trouble coming up with your summarising phrase, try adding after you've written the rest of the vision statement.



Your Vision Statement Should Describe the Best Possible Outcome

You should base your vision statements on the best possible outcome. In fact, you might want to envision something even better than what you consider to be the best possible outcome. Remember that the purpose of the vision statement is to inspire, energise, motivate, and stimulate your creativity, not to serve as a measuring stick for success; that is the job of your objectives and goals.

A powerful vision statement should stretch expectations and aspirations helping you jump out of your comfort zone.

Some people may object to the use of such an optimistic or unrealistic vision statement because others may consider it a failure when they fall short of the best possible outcome. Just keep in mind that, back in the early 80's, Microsoft's vision of "a PC in every home running Microsoft software" would have been considered by most to be highly unrealistic. It is safe to say that, even now, not every home has a PC in it and not every PC runs Microsoft software, but that doesn't mean Microsoft has failed. It just means they still have room for improvement.

Describe Your Vision Statement in the Present Tense

Describe your vision statement in present tense as if you were reporting what you actually see, hear, think and feel after your ideal outcome was realised.

Make your Vision Statement Emotional

Your vision statement should describe how you will feel when the outcome is realised. Including an emotional payoff in your vision statement infuses it with passion and will make it even more compelling, inspiring, and energising.



Add Sensory Details to Your Vision Statement

The more sensory details you can provide, the more powerful your statement. Describe the scenes, colours, sounds, and shapes. Describe who is there and what everyone is doing. These sensory details will help you build a more complete and powerful mental image of your ideal outcome.



DEVELOPING A MISSION STATEMENT

When wording the mission statement, consider the organisation's products, services, markets, values, and concern for public image, and maybe priorities of activities.

- Start by answering the three questions in some detail (see below)
- Summarise your answers and develop a few paragraphs to describe what your organisation does.

What do we do?

This question should not be answered in terms of what is physically delivered to customers, but by the real and/or psychological needs that are fulfilled when customers buy your products or services. Customers make purchase decisions for many reasons, including economical, logistical, and emotional factors.

An excellent illustration of this is a business in Sydney that imports hand-made jewellery from east Africa. When asked what her business does, the owner replied, "We import and market east African jewellery." But when asked why customers buy her jewellery, she explained that, "They're buying a story of where the jewellery came from." This is an important distinction and answering this question from the need-fulfilled perspective will help you answer the other two questions effectively.

How do we do it?

This question captures the more technical elements of the business. Your answer should encompass the physical product or service and how it is sold and delivered to your customers, and it should fit with the need that the customer fulfils with its purchase.



In the example above, the business owner had originally defined her business as selling east African jewellery and was attempting to sell it on shelves of boutique retail stores with little success. After modifying the answer to the first question, she realised that she needed to deliver the story to her customers along with the product. She began organizing wine parties that included a video of east Africa, stories of personal experiences there, and pictures and descriptions of the villagers who make the jewellery. This method of delivery has been very successful for her business.

For whom do we do it?

The answer to this question is also vital, as it will help you focus your marketing efforts. Though many business owners would like to believe otherwise, not everyone is a potential customer, as customers will almost always have both demographic and geographic limitations. It is generally a good idea to define the demographic characteristics (age, income, etc.) of customers who are likely to buy and then define a geographic area in which your business can gain a presence. Use this segmentation in your mission statement so that you understand their needs. As you grow, you can add new customer groups and expand your geographic focus.

An additional consideration with mission statements is that most businesses will have multiple customer groups that purchase for different reasons. In these cases, one mission statement can be written to answer each of the three questions for each customer group.

Also, as a final thought, remember that your vision and mission statements are meant to help guide the business, not to lock you into a particular direction. As your company grows and as the competitive environment changes, your mission may require change to include additional or different needs fulfilled, delivery systems, or customer groups. With this in mind, your vision and mission



should be revisited periodically to determine whether modifications are desirable.

Ensure that wording of the mission is to the extent that management and employees can infer some order of priorities in how products and services are delivered.

When refining the mission, a useful exercise is to add or delete a word from the mission to realize the change in scope of the mission statement and assess how concise is its wording.



DEVELOPING A VALUES STATEMENT

Establish four to six core values from which the organisation would like to operate. Consider values of customers, shareholders, employees and the community.

Notice any differences between the organisation's preferred values and its true values (the values actually reflected by members' behaviours in the organisation).

Record each preferred value, then "rank" the values with 1, 2, or 3 in terms of the priority needed by the organisation with 3 indicating the value is very important to the organisation and 1 is least important. Then go through the list again to rank how people think the values are actually being enacted in the organisation with 3 indicating the values are fully enacted and 1 indicating the value is hardly reflected at all.

Then address discrepancies where a value is highly preferred (ranked with a 3), but hardly enacted (ranked with a 1). Which value must remain to support the vision and mission?

Complete your list of 4 to 6 core values.



PHRASING VISION STATEMENTS – EXAMPLES

Proposed Vision Statement

Lead in bringing interactive entertainment to a mass market.

Grow technically and geographically into a worldwide, world renowned organisation.

Be a survivor and prosper in a heavily and unfairly regulated industry.

Maintain a manageable number of clients whereby top management is involved in all continued but controlled growth.

Create an environment in which satisfied customers, quality products, and bottom line profits go hand in hand.

Be a major force in high performance banking in the community bank arena.

Lead in providing applications to the construction industry throughout the world.

Be the single source software provider to the financial services industry.

Be a technical services firm, with blue chip utility clients, that has a "Mercedes" image, Boy Scout principles, and is fun.

Become the most customer responsive producer of bull bars in Australia.

Be the recognised world leader in security system architecture and engineering.

Amended Construction

We bring interactive entertainment to the world.

We will grow into a worldwide, world-renowned organisation.

We survive despite regulations.

We grow conservatively.

Our quality customers and products make us money.

We give out high tech savings boxes.

We provide the world's builders.

We are financeware.

We are the Mercedes of electricity and always at your service.

We make bull bars the way our customers want them.

We secure space.



Continue our role and responsibility as the industry initiator and market leader for 70 years of bringing useful products to the marketplace while continually rewarding our customers and employees.

With the help of our customers and staff we bring good things to life.

Double in size and capacity within five years.

We double in five years.

Enhance our established leadership position and make more money while doing so.

Leadership is our reward



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