

Creating a Mission and Vision Statement

Mission Statement

The mission statement should be a concise statement of business strategy and 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?

Your mission statement is the best vehicle to get the word out about the “why” and the “wow” behind your company. In truth, your mission statement is no less important than your business plan. It needs to explain — eloquently, succinctly, and passionately — the core reasons for your business’s existence. Your mission statement should inspire others to want to know more about your ideas, helping to position your company in the marketplace and to fuel growth.

Here are 10 effective mission statement writing tips to help you get started:

1. **Ask yourself the right questions.** To begin, ask yourself these questions: What business are you in? Why are you in this business? What do you want for yourself, your family, and your customers? What are the three or four objectives or attributes that define you? Think about the spark of excitement that initially ignited your desire to open a business in the first place. What will keep it burning?
2. **Say it clearly.** Clearly state your business goals and objectives. Explain what the business is, what special niche it inhabits in the marketplace, and how it will make a difference in the lives of customers and clients.
3. **What makes you different.** You are pursuing the same customer dollars as your competitors. How do you stand out from those other companies? Is it because you do something better, cheaper, or faster than the competition? Identify any underlying philosophies or values that guide your company.
4. **Build your brand.** Use your mission statement to build your unique brand. Communicate your business’s key value to the customer or client segment you serve.
5. **Keep it short and sweet.** Ideally, you should be able to summarize your company's mission in a few sentences. Consider it your elevator pitch. You should be able to state your company’s mission succinctly in the time it takes to ride an elevator from the ground floor to the top floor.
6. **Be honest.** Make sure that when you read your own mission statement, it reflects what you truly believe.

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7. **Make it a joint effort.** Even if you are the sole proprietor of your business, don't write your mission statement along, seek input from others, both inside and outside the company. Collaborators can help you to better see the strengths and weaknesses of your mission statement.
8. **Polish the language.** See to it that you have several pairs of eyes (ideally belonging to wordy, editor types) review your mission statement many times. Your mission statement should be error-free, eloquent, and precise. It should be dynamic and inspirational. In short, it should be as close to perfect as you can get it.
9. **Spread the word.** Once your mission statement is complete, start sharing it by posting it everywhere you can. It should be prominently displayed on the company's Web site, as well as in brochures and other marketing collateral. You can even consider adding it to the bottom of company e-mails.
10. **Revise as needed.** As your business grows and changes, so too might your company's mission. Revisit your mission statement on a regular basis to evaluate whether it should be revised or updated.

Vision Statement

Vision statements and mission statements are very different. The vision should state what the founder ultimately envisions the business to be, in terms of growth, values, employees, contributions to society. A vision statement is your ticket to success. A photograph in words of your company's future, it provides the inspiration for both your daily operations and your strategic decisions.

A vision statement may apply to an entire company or to a single division of that company. Whether for all or part of an organization, the vision statement answers the question, "**Where do we want to go?**" What you are doing when creating a vision statement is articulating your dreams and hopes for your business. It reminds you of what you are trying to build.

Unlike the mission statement, a vision statement is for you and the other members of your company, not for your customers or clients. When writing a vision statement, your mission statement and your core competencies can be a valuable starting point for articulating your values. Be sure when you're creating your vision statement not to fall into the trap of only thinking ahead a year or two.

Here are 4 effective vision statement writing tips to help you get started:

1. **Examine Your Mission Statement** A mission statement answers the questions, Why do we exist? What is it we do well? How do we do it

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- 2. Dare to Dream** Before you can travel to the moon you have to look up at the stars. To write a vision statement, focus on the basics of your mission statement and extrapolate; where is your business going to be five years from now? What will your company have accomplished? By crafting a vision with a definitive time goal, you make it measurable, and measured goals are more likely to be achieved.
- 3. Shape Your Vision Statement** A company vision is a statement that summarizes the purpose of your company. The statement must inspire staff, instill confidence, and represent your business mission. The process of creating a company vision requires creativity, clarity of mind, and a willingness to take risks. Ensure that your vision statement is motivating and purposeful.

When you write your vision statement, make sure that you have chosen the vision that is most important to you. If you don't fully believe in your vision statement, you won't be able to fully commit to it and writing a vision statement that you can't or won't fully commit to is a waste of time.

- 4. Commit to Your Vision Statement** Take action to make your vision statement come true: Use it as the basis of your business planning. As the vision statement provides your destination, the 'where you want to get to', all of your goals and strategies will focus on making it happen. It's the natural basis for all of your business planning.

If you just tell it to people once, your vision statement will fade and disappear. Keep your vision statement alive: Share it with potential partners, staff and employees if you have them. Besides talking about it, keep it physically prominent. Print it out and post it on your desk, in your staff room, wherever you, your colleagues and your staff will see it (and be reminded of it) daily.

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