



Vision and Mission

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This time I thought I would write about strategic issues related to developing the organizational culture you want: Your Vision Statement and Mission Statements. Many large organizations have them, and many others do not. But even if you have these statements, you need to take steps to ensure your local staff can understand and relate to them. So read on and hopefully you will find some useful tips to help develop a healthy and productive organizational culture influenced by your Vision and Mission Statements.

Does your team understand and identify with your Vision Statement?

Perhaps this is a good time to take another look at what a vision statement is. A vision statement is simply the long term goal of your business. It is the strategic intent of the business and it is important that your entire team can understand and accept the vision.



All of your staff, and every business must be able to clearly describe why it is there, and what it is there to achieve. Developing a vision and mission statement is a way of expressing these ideas to yourself, your customers, your employees, and everyone else.

For any business to succeed, it must know what it is about. The value in knowing your final destination (your vision) is that you can choose to take the specific paths that lead you there. If you don't know where you are heading, then you can make any choice and go in any direction (including backwards). Without a clear vision the best you can hope for is success by coincidence, rather than by design. Guided by a vision statement, your action is intentional and keeps you pointed in the right direction.

You need a Business Vision that Inspires!

Your statement should stretch potential and performance. You want a potent, striking, and valuable vision to follow. In order to develop an effective shared vision statement, you also need to be able to describe the kinds of relationships that you want with:

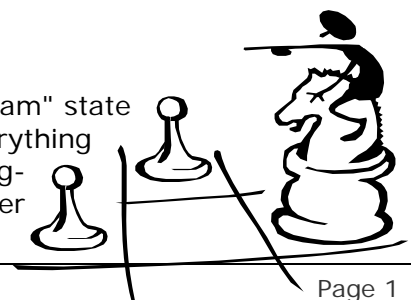
- Your Customers,
- Your Suppliers,
- Your Competitors, and of course with
- Your Team.



Vision statements come in many shapes and sizes, but they must all answer the basic question:

What will success look like?

The main purpose of the vision statement is to outline the "dream" state of the business. In other words: If your business could be everything you dreamed, how would it be? Once you have created the long-term vision for your business, it creates the basis for all other





business decisions.

Here are a few examples of powerful vision statements from the real world:

eHam.net – *“To build the largest and most complete Amateur Radio community site on the Internet.”*

Coachville – *“Everyone is a coach.”*

Bill Gates – *“There will be a personal computer on every desk running Microsoft software.”*

And now perhaps a little less famous, but still real example of a vision statement from the real world (my company):

CanadAsia Management Development Ltd. – *“Challenge is the path to Success!”*

Don't worry if you don't have a vision statement yet – you are not alone. But I it can do a lot to help you in developing the culture that you want in your organization. So you might want to develop your own vision statement. To help your team take 'ownership' and relate your vision statement, you should involve them in its creation.



In order to become more effective as a team, you need a 'shared vision'. In developing a shared vision, your team must be able to agree on answers to the following questions:

- 1) **Why was your business started?**
- 2) **What are you really providing for your customers (in terms of value)?**
- 3) **If the business could be everything you dreamed, how would it be?**
- 4) **What do you, as a team, want more of?**
- 5) **What do you, as a team, want less of?**

Once you are happy with your Vision Statement, it's time to address your "Mission Statement". A Mission Statement describes how your business is going to accomplish its vision. For any business to succeed it needs to know what, precisely, it is that they do. The Mission Statement describes the 'what' of your business. It states why your organization is in business and what you are hoping to achieve.

A typical mission statement contains three components:

1. The overall purpose of your business - what are you trying to achieve.
2. What your business does - products and services it provides.
3. What's important to your business - the values your business lives by.

Your mission must be guided by your values.

- Your values must meet your organizational goals as well as community goals.
- Your values are a statement of your beliefs.



- Your values must be clear and practical.
- Your values will direct the actions of all involved.
- Your values are a key part of strategic planning.

Here are some examples of mission statements:



Pfizer Pharmaceutical's mission statement:

"We dedicate ourselves to humanity's quest for longer, healthier, happier lives through innovation in pharmaceutical, consumer and animal health products".

Purpose: quest for longer, healthier, happier lives

Business: pharmaceutical, consumer and animal health products

Values: innovation



Dell Computers mission statement:

"With the power of Dell's team of talented people, we are able to provide customers with superb value; high-quality, relevant technology; customized systems; superior service and support; and products and services that are easy to buy and use".

Purpose: provide customers with superb value technology

Business: high quality, relevant technology, customized systems

Values: superior service and support, easy to buy, easy to use

Again, let's look at the development of a Mission Statement by answering the following questions about your business:

- Who you are?
- What business you are in?
- Who your customers are? and
- What makes you different from the competition?



A well-crafted mission and vision statement becomes the glue that binds the various parts of the business together and drives performance in your team. It also ensures that everyone reads from the same page— regardless of language or culture.

Conclusion

Don't rush the development of your Vision and Mission Statements. Take your time, involve your team and come up with something meaningful and long-lasting. Getting this right will do a lot to help build a positive, productive and sustainable culture for your business.

I hope that you have found some of this information to be useful and look forward to seeing you next time. Good business to you.



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