



How to Define Inspiring Mission & Vision Statements

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRO

CHAPTER ONE: WHAT IS A MISSION STATEMENT?

CHAPTER TWO: WHAT IS A VISION STATEMENT?

CHAPTER THREE: WHY YOU SHOULD CREATE A MISSION & VISION
STATEMENT

CHAPTER FOUR: HOW TO CREATE A MISSION & VISION STATEMENT

CHAPTER FIVE: EXAMPLES OF MISSION & VISION STATEMENTS



INTRODUCTION

If you went out of business tomorrow, what would happen?

Who would care? What problem would there no longer be a solution for? How big of an impact would it have on other businesses?

Without a clear mission and vision statement, it's hard to consider these outcomes. It's hard to place a finger of exactly what it is that you do and why you do it. And it's hard to evaluate your worth and where your business fits into the larger landscape.

That's because your mission and vision play an extremely pivotal part in your strategic planning process – or at least they should. Without a sense of purpose and direction, it's nearly impossible to thoughtfully prepare for the future, let alone determine what plays you should be running each month.



CHAPTER ONE: WHAT IS A MISSION STATEMENT?

Think of your mission statement as a business tool – one that is directly tied to your larger business plan and is designed to signal exactly why your business exists.

Your mission statement should be inspirational enough for your team to find purpose in, but also direct enough to serve as a filter for making important business decisions. Additionally, your mission statement should encapsulate the product or service you deliver, the audience you deliver it to, and the problem it solves.

Sounds like a lot to boil down into one statement? We'll break the process down

into actionable steps in the following chapters, but for now, let's zoom in on the overall theme here: Finding your "why."

Finding Your "Why"

When it comes to finding your "why," we'd be remiss not to mention the incredible work of Author, Speaker, and Marketing Consultant Simon Sinek.





Simon Sinek demonstrating the "golden circle" concept, where leaders are encouraged to create the foundation for their business by first addressing why they exist. (image via startwithwhy.com)

Back in 2009, Sinek wrote *Start With Why: How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone to Take Action*, a book about finding and leveraging inspiration in our everyday work. At the time, this book took the marketing world by storm, finding its way onto countless "must-read" lists, and the lessons still ring true almost a decade later.

"There are only two ways to influence human behavior: you can manipulate it or you can inspire it. Very few people or companies can

clearly articulate WHY they do WHAT they do. By WHY I mean your purpose, cause or belief - WHY does your company exist? WHY do you get out of bed every morning? And WHY should anyone care? People don't buy WHAT you do, they buy WHY you do it," Sinek explains in the book.

And he makes a really great point: Figuring out "why" you do something makes it easier for you, and those you work with to find fulfillment in doing it. And when you see the value in what you're doing or offering, it becomes easier for your customers to buy-in to that mission.





CHAPTER TWO: WHAT IS A VISION STATEMENT?

While your mission statement is rooted in the action your business takes and the reasoning behind it, your vision statement aims to clarify your ideal future state for the business. The point of a vision statement isn't to spend hours fine-tuning detailed plans for how you intend on achieving the next chapter of your business. Instead, think of your vision statement as an opportunity to harness your inspiration, passion, and aspirations for the long-term business you are building.

Exploring the Future State

We're living in an era of constant disruption, innovation, and uncertainty surrounding "what's next." Thanks to this challenging climate, trying to hone your predictions about the future of your business can feel a bit daunting.

In the past, historical performance served as a strong reference point in planning for the long-term. However, companies are now finding that to remain competitive they must lean into more anticipatory thinking to protect themselves from market changes, including rising expectations and the evolution of consumer behavior.

While it's critical that you consider the risk landscape as you develop your vision and plans for the future, try not to let your future-facing concerns limit your creativity. This part of the process is intended to be exciting. This is your chance to think about transformation and the road ahead.

So in addition to evaluating risk, you'll also want to consider what your future customer looks like, cares about, and thinks about. You want to imagine how

your current story will evolve and adapt. You want to identify current dependencies and make predictions about how your priorities will shift over time.



CHAPTER THREE: WHY YOU SHOULD CREATE A

MISSION & VISION STATEMENT

The Benefits of Defining a Mission Statement

1) It encourages alignment.

Let's say you're thinking about going Black Friday shopping with a group of friends. You chat about your plans via a group text and manage to sort out a time and place to meet before heading out to brave the crowds. With the plans secured, you're feeling pretty good. You have your eye on this great deal for a toaster oven and you're not going home without it.



You meet your friends at the store only to find out that Jim is just there for the people watching, the 85" television Melissa's after is only in stock at the department store across town, and Steve drove his car, not his truck, so there's limited space to lug home all your merch.

Now imagine that in addition to planning a time and place to meet, you'd also considered why you were going shopping and what everyone wanted to get out of the shopping trip. If you all communicated a bit more about your purpose and expectations, you could have planned a better shopping strategy, right?

Much like this example suggests, having an organized, intentionally aligned business strategy makes it easier for you to accomplish what's best for the overall business, while aiming to meet individual needs, too.

2) It streamlines decision making.

In most business environments, speed is key. For projects to move forward without bottlenecks, leadership needs to feel empowered and able to make hundreds of decisions -- both big and small -- with confidence. Having a well-defined mission statement makes it easier for those decisions to be made at scale by providing a functional foundation for making a choice that supports the business' goals and purpose.

Additionally, if your company is large enough where your leadership team has the ability to delegate decision making, having a mission statement provides

them with the direction they need to execute effectively.

3) It strengthens your brand.

Your brand's identity is comprised of several different strategic elements that all tie back to what you do, why you do it, and how you do it differently than everyone else. In other words, your brand is far more than just your logo and the color scheme you employ on your website.

For modern businesses, strong brand recall requires you to nail your purpose and promise down to the specific emotions you want your customers and employees to feel when they think of you. And this is where a mission statement will make a world of a difference.

"You can't create a personality for a business unless you know what that business is about," [explains Marketing Specialist Kathryn Wheeler.](#)

The Benefits of Defining a Vision Statement

1) It serves as an opportunity evaluation framework.

In situations where opportunity cost could dramatically shift the path you've outlined for your business, having a clear vision to turn to can be extremely helpful. Serving as a focal point for the future, your vision statement can help you work through the pros and cons of opportunities that present themselves so that you can determine the best course of action.

For example, let's say you are approached by a larger company about the potential of being acquired. This is a huge opportunity – but what will the outcome be? Will you have to relocate? Will you be forced to let go of employees? And will that outcome reflect the long-term plan you had for the business?

2) It's inspiring.

"An inspiring vision statement should inform a clear direction and priorities for the organization, while challenging all the team members to grow together," explains CEO of TopResultsCoaching Kirstin O'Donovan.

People want to make an impact. They want to know that the work they are doing is contributing to something larger -- something meaningful. [According to a 2016 global survey about purpose at work from LinkedIn and Imperative:](#)

74% of candidates revealed that they want a job where they feel like their work matters.

To remain competitive, retain top talent, and build a strong team, it's important that your business defines a vision statement that illustrates your larger purpose and plan. This gives people something to grab onto and root their work in.

3) It helps employees envision a future at your company.

If you asked five employees what their future at your company looked like, would they know? What would they say?

Without a clear business plan for the future, it's often challenging for employees to imagine themselves remaining passionate and motivated enough to stick around. And when that uncertainty starts to set in, it can derail everything.

No seriously: Take IMPACT Branding & Design, for example.

This is
IMPACT.



This Connecticut-based HubSpot partner agency isn't shy about sharing the trials and tribulations that led them to a course-altering business transformation -- one rooted in defining a clear mission, vision, and set of values.

In a video created for IMPACT Elite -- the agency's dedicated marketing community on Facebook -- Director of Talent, Natalie Davis, shared that she actually left the company a few years back (she has since returned) after feeling unclear about the expectations of her role and her future at the company.

After losing 21 people in just seven short months, IMPACT quickly learned that this uncertainty was plaguing their retention and ability to move the business forward. To combat this, they got to work on defining a vision statement that would be specific, clear, and shared far and wide.

And it worked. In the two years following this transformation, the agency doubled in size and managed to only lose five employees.

TURNOVER IMPROVEMENT

	1/15 to 7/15 (7 months)	7/15 to 9/17 (2 years, 2 months)
Starting Team Size	36 People	23 People
People Left	21 People	5 People
Ending Team Size	23 People	42 People

 **IMPACT** @bobruffolo

#INBOUND17

A slide from IMPACT Founder & CEO Bob Ruffolo's INBOUND presentation deck.

The lesson? Your vision matter more than you think. Take your time and plan accordingly. The more excited you are about your future plans, the easier it will be for your employees -- both existing and prospective -- to want to help you check those boxes.

CHAPTER FOUR: HOW TO CREATE A MISSION & VISION STATEMENT

How to Create a Mission Statement

1) Ask yourself: Why do you do what you do?

Do you know your company's "why"?

When we look back to the work of Simon Sinek (mentioned above), defining why you do what you do is often the most enlightening aspect of this mission statement exercise. And he urges businesses to start here before going on to define their "how" and "what."

Sinek explains that this is because, “people don’t buy what you do. They buy why you do it.” And this is a really powerful concept.

If you can get people to believe in your “why” the way you do, they’ll quickly transform from customers or prospects to evangelists who share your values and beliefs.

2) Ask yourself: How do you do what you do?

Once you’ve nailed down exactly why you do what you do, your next task is to determine how you go about doing it. By answering this question, you’ll also be able to draw out how the way you approach providing a solution differs from the way that your competitors approach the same, or similar, issue.

For example, you might be in the business of customer service. In this space, the “what” behind your line of work would be helping customers arrive at solutions for their problems, however, the “how” behind what you do could take shape a few different ways:

You might ...

- Offer 24/7 live chat to meet the needs of your customers when it's convenient for them.
- Assign dedicated representatives to high-value customers to ensure quality interactions.
- Offer only email communication for troubleshooting customer issues.
- Have a support line set up from 8 am - 5 pm to address incoming customer calls.
- Conduct proactive outreach to ensure customers are making the most of your product or service.

Notice the variety? That's why we suggest that you spend some time answering this question. Thinking strategically about your approach is something many businesses don't do enough, and as a result, there are often gaps or improvement areas that need to be addressed.

3) Ask yourself: What you do for your customers?

Businesses exist to solve a problems and meet demands -- whether that means providing software to simplify your payroll, a gas pump to fuel your car, a bakery to satisfy your sweet tooth ... the list goes on.

Some businesses solve big, complex problems that have the potential to change the world, while other businesses provide a service that lends itself to a small subset of a smaller niche market. Regardless of what your business does, it's important that you have a grasp on how to articulate it in a clear, concise way.

A good rule of thumb here is to try and nail down an elevator pitch for your business. Imagine you're on an episode of the business-themed reality television series Shark Tank and you have to pitch your business to a group of investors with a low threshold for fluff, uncertainty, and unpreparedness.

How would you go about summarizing your business in this setting? What aspects of what you do can you afford to leave out? Aim for impact and keep it simple.

How to Create a Vision Statement

- 1) Get in a forward-thinking mindset.**

While we touched on this briefly back in the beginning of this guide, there's more to be said about the importance of forward-thinking and future-proofing as it pertains to vision setting.

Perhaps what's most interesting about setting a vision for the future of your business is that it allows you an opportunity to define and plan plays that will guide you towards becoming the business you want to be – the business you, and others, want to work for.

This isn't to say the business you have now isn't good enough or isn't performing. Instead, this part of the planning process forces you to think about what you are going to do when the things that work today stop working. Or, if they continue working and ultimately begin to work better, what the outcome of those advancements will look like.

This process involves asking questions like:

- What types of products or services might interrupt ours in the marketplace?
- What types of growing pains are we going to experience if we scale the company?
- How many additional resources can we anticipate needing to get where we

want to go?

- Why is this vision the best outcome? Who benefits? How?

2) Define your SMART goals.

When it comes to identifying your long-term business goals, it's helpful to start with a framework for goal setting. We recommend using the SMART goal approach:

S

Smart. Your goal should be unambiguous and communicate what is expected, why it is important, who's involved, where it is going to happen and which constraints are in place.

M

Measurable. Your goal should have concrete criteria for measuring progress and reaching the goal.

A

Attainable. Your goal should be realistic and possible for your team to reach.

R

Relevant. Your goal should matter to your business and address a core initiative.

T

Timely. You should have an expected date that you will reach the goal.

This approach forces you to ground your goals in reality, while providing the flexibility to push yourself to achieve more. For the sake of clarity, let's take a look at how the SMART goal framework might look in practice:

SMART Goal Examples:

“The culture team will increase employee retention by 25% in Q1 of 2018 by introducing a new remote work program, kickstarting a feedback forum, and adjusting compensation based on new competitive data.”

“The PR team will earn 30 editorial placements for the new careers page by the end of April by conducting outreach through our existing network and working with the content team on a weekly basis to plan relevant guest contributions.”

“The development team will launch the new reporting app and drive 4,000 new users by the end of H1 by sticking to the DARCI model, outsourcing the QA work, and committing 30 hours of dev time a week to the project.”

3) Edit and refine.

When you're dreaming about the future, ideal state of your business, it's easy for the list of aspirations to snowball. This is a good thing – this means that you're genuinely investing in taking your business to new heights.

However, in order for your vision to be both actionable and impactful, it's important that you carefully refine it based on priorities and feedback. Cut goals that you don't feel you are properly set up to achieve in the next 5-10 years and save them for a vision statement revision down the line. The beauty of your vision statement is that it can, and should be, constantly evolving as you begin to make progress.





CHAPTER FIVE: EXAMPLES OF MISSION & VISION STATEMENT FORMATS

Mission Statement Examples

STARBUCKS

OUR MISSION

To inspire and nurture the human spirit – one person, one cup and one neighborhood at a time.

THE WALT DISNEY COMPANY

OUR MISSION



The mission of The Walt Disney Company is to be one of the world's leading producers and providers of entertainment and information. Using our portfolio of brands to differentiate our content, services and consumer products, we seek to develop the most creative, innovative and profitable entertainment experiences and related products in the world.

REFINERY29

Our Mission

To be the #1 new-media brand for smart, creative and stylish women everywhere.

BRILLIANT EARTH



OUR MISSION

At Brilliant Earth we strive to make jewelry as beautiful as it can be. We are passionate about cultivating a more ethical, transparent, and sustainable jewelry industry.

Mission/Vision

Food Cowboy Foundation's mission is to help food companies, charities, consumers and entrepreneurs collaborate to reduce hunger and protect the environment by reducing food waste.

Food Cowboy Foundation promotes the highest use of wholesome unmarketable food and reduces hunger and waste by using technology, social media and strategic investment to help bridge the logistics gap and economics hurdles that result in food waste. We accomplish this through:

- Financial investment to increase the capacity of food recovery and diversion organizations and support research and development into food waste solutions
- No Waste Promise initiatives to let consumers know which businesses and organizations are working hard to reduce waste
- Education tools to inform the public, private and consumer sectors about waste and sustainability

PLANET FITNESS

Mission Statement

Planet Fitness Mission Statement

We at Planet Fitness are here to provide a unique environment in which anyone – and we mean anyone – can be comfortable. A diverse, Judgement Free Zone® where a lasting, active lifestyle can be built. Our product is a tool, a means to an end; not a brand name or a mold-maker, but a tool that can be used by anyone. In the end, it's all about you. As we evolve and educate ourselves, we will seek to perfect this safe, energetic environment, where everyone feels accepted and respected. We are not here to kiss your butt, only to kick it if that's what you need.



Vision Statement Examples

DEFENDERS OF WILDLIFE

OUR VISION: DIVERSE WILDLIFE POPULATIONS IN NORTH AMERICA ARE SECURE AND THRIVING, SUSTAINED BY A NETWORK OF HEALTHY LANDS AND WATERS.

COCA COLA

The Coca Cola Company Vision

To achieve our mission, we have developed a set of goals, which we will work with our bottlers to deliver:

People: Inspiring each other to be the best we can be by providing a great place to work

Portfolio: Offering the world a portfolio of drinks brands that anticipate and satisfy people's desires and needs

Partners: Nurturing a winning network of partners and building mutual loyalty

Planet: Being a responsible global citizen that makes a difference by helping to build and support sustainable communities

Profit: Maximising long-term return to shareholders, while being mindful of our overall responsibilities

Productivity: Being a highly effective, lean and fast-moving organisation.

VISION

Become the global leader in the integration and application of information technology, engineering, and science to solve our customers' most demanding challenges.

We will deliver innovative solutions through the efforts of our diverse and talented people who are dedicated to our customers' success. We will empower our teams, contribute to our communities, and operate sustainably.

HAWAI'I PACIFIC UNIVERSITY

VISION

Hawai'i Pacific will be consistently ranked among the United States' top 10 Western, independent, comprehensive universities, leveraging its geographic position between the Western and Eastern hemispheres and its relationships around the Pacific Rim to deliver an educational experience that is distinct among American campuses.

JET.COM

Our Vision



We're all in it together.

We share a sense of community with our shoppers and our partners, and we're striving to create a business model that reflects that.



We work collaboratively with our retail partners, not competitively.

Our pricing algorithm is designed to help our partners find ways to reduce inefficiencies, so they win too.



Savings smart and simple.

As a Jet shopper, you get real, meaningful savings when you shop—without a Herculean effort. And if you ever need anything, the Jet Heads are here to help 24/7.