



# Fundamentals of Project management: Developing a Mission, Vision, Goals, and Objectives for the Project

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# Introduction

- Before a project team does any work, it should spend time ensuring that it has a shared understanding of where it is going.
- The terms used to define that destination are “**mission**,” “**vision**,” “**goals**,” and “**objectives**.”
- And it is at this very early stage that projects tend to fail, because everyone takes for **granted** that “**we all know what the mission is**.”

# Defining the Problem

- The **way you define** a problem determines how you will **solve it**,
  - it is critical that a **proper definition** be developed.
- For example, too often a problem is defined in terms of a solution.
  - A person may say, "I have a problem. My car has quit, and I have no way to get to work. How am I going to get my car repaired, because I have no money to do it?"
- The problem has essentially been defined as "**How do I repair my car?**" The actual problem, however, at its most fundamental level, is that the person has **no way to get to work**.

# Defining the Problem

- People sometimes define a problem as a goal. A **goal** in itself **is not** a **problem**.
- It is when there are obstacles that make it **difficult to reach the goal** that one has a **problem**.
  - problem solving involves finding ways to deal with obstacles: They must be overcome, bypassed, or removed.
- A problem is a **gap** between where you are and where you want to be, with **obstacles existing** that prevent easy movement to close the gap.

# Confusion of Terms

- Suppose a person tells you that she is taking a new job in a distant city, and she plans to move there. She immediately realizes that she must find a place to live.
  - So she says, “**I have a problem. I have to find a place to live.**”
  - You ask her what her **mission** is.
  - “**To find a place to live**” she says.
  - And how about her **vision**?
  - “**To have a place to live**” she answers, a little confused.
- No wonder she is **confused**. All three statements sound alike! She needs to understand the difference between them if she is to solve this problem.

# Confusion of Terms

- A problem is a **gap**.
  - Ask her to tell us where she wants to be when her problem is solved.
  - She would say, "**I would have a place to live in the new city.**"
  - "**And where are you now?**" you ask.
  - "I have no place to live," she says.
  - Then the **gap** is between having a place and not having one.



# Confusion of Terms

- But—would just **any place** be okay? Of course not.
  - She doesn't want to live under a bridge, although homeless people sometimes do.
- So if you ask her, "What kind of place are you looking for?"
- She can tell you. "It needs to have three bedrooms, the house must be of a certain size, and I prefer a certain style," she says. This is her **vision** for the kind of place she wants to live in.
- That **vision** literally paints **a picture in her mind**, and, when she finds a place that comes close to that picture, she will have "arrived" at her destination. This is the function of vision—it defines "**done**."

# Confusion of Terms

- Her **mission**, then, is to find a place that conforms to her **vision**. Another way to say this is that **the mission of a project is always to achieve the vision**. In doing so, it solves the stated problem.

Problem: I have no place to live.		
MUSTS	WANTS	NICE
3 bedrooms 2,500 sq. ft. 2-car garage 1-acre lot large family room	room for home office basement	fireplace in family room
Mission: To find a place that meets all musts and as many of the others as possible.		



# The Real World

- The major “political” problem you may encounter is that the sponsor will undoubtedly **have given you a mission** that is based **on his definition** of the problem to be solved.
- Sometimes his definition will be **incorrect**, and you will have to confront this.

# The Real Mission of Every Project

- The vision you are trying to achieve is the one the **customer holds**.
- Another way to say this is that you are trying to satisfy the customer's needs.
  - It isn't easy, because even the customer isn't clear about them.
- Your best safeguard is to keep the customer involved in the project from concept to completion so that there is a constant check on whether what you are doing will achieve the desired result.

# The Real Mission of Every Project

- The mission of the project can be written by answering two questions:

1. **What are we going to do?**

2. **For whom are we going to do it?**

- The mission statement defines “**what**” you are doing;
- “**how**” you are going to do it is **project strategy** and should be dealt with separately.

# Developing Project Objectives

- Once a mission statement has been developed, you can write your project **objectives**.
- Note that **objectives** are much more **specific** than the mission statement itself and define **results that must be achieved** in order for the overall mission to be accomplished.
- **Also, an objective defines the desired end result.**
- I may want to finish this chapter by 10 o'clock this morning. That is my desired outcome or result—my objective.
- The way in which I achieve that objective is to perform a number of tasks. These might include typing text into my computer, reviewing some other literature on the topic about which I am writing, calling a colleague to ask a question for clarification, and printing out the chapter, proofing it, and entering some revisions into my computer.

# SMART

- ▶ The following acronym may help you remember the essential qualities that a statement of objectives must have.
- ▶ We say that an objective must be SMART, each letter standing for a condition as follows:
  - ▶ **S**pecific
  - ▶ **M**easurable
  - ▶ **A**ttainable
  - ▶ **R**ealistic
  - ▶ **T**ime limited
- ▶ We all know that some people are capable of more output than others. So defining the measurement and attainability aspects of goal or objective setting is very difficult.

# Assessing Project Risks

- Unfortunately, the best plans sometimes don't work.
- One safeguard in managing projects is to **think** about **the risks** ahead that could sink the job.
- This can be done for **critical objectives** and for other parts of the plan.



# Assessing Project Risks

- The simplest way to conduct a risk analysis is to ask, “**What could go wrong?**” or “**What could keep us from achieving our objective?**”
- It is usually best to list the risks first, then think about contingencies for dealing with them.

# Assessing Project Risks

- One way to look at risk is to divide a flip chart page in half, have the group brainstorm the risks, which you write down on the left side of the page, and then go back and list the contingencies—things you can do to manage the risks if they do materialize.

What could go wrong?	Contingency
1. Exposure wrong	Bracket the exposure
2. Shots unacceptable	Take extra photos
3. Film lost or damaged	Hand carry to client
4. Weather delays	Allow extra time

# Assessing Project Risks

- It is helpful to assess risks of failure of the following:
  - The schedule
  - The budget
  - Project quality
  - Customer satisfaction

# Assessing Project Risks

- You are not trying to identify every possible risk, just some of the more likely ones.
- This point should be made to **team members** who are highly analytical or who perhaps have a tendency to be negative in general.