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How to Write Vision and Mission Statements for Your Brand



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**Branding For Dummies,
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By **Bill Chiaravalle, Barbara Findlay Schenck**

Your brand is a reflection of what you stand for, so it has to align perfectly with the values and purpose of your business or organization. The following tips are helpful if you're unclear about what you want your brand to stand for, the customers it serves, and what it promises.

This information is also great if you have a good sense of your vision and mission but haven't yet committed anything to writing. This is the time to put ideas into words.

Branding starts with two essential statements:

- **Your vision statement** defines your long-term aspirations. It explains why you're doing what you're doing and the ultimate good you want to achieve through your success. Think of your vision as the picture of where you ultimately want your work to lead you.
- **Your mission statement** defines the purpose of your work and the effect you intend to have on the world around you. It states what you do for others and the approach you follow as you aim to achieve the aspirations you've set for yourself, your organization, or your business. Think of your mission as the route you'll follow to achieve your vision.

A good historic example of clearly defined vision and mission statements comes from the 19th-century trek across America called the Oregon Trail. The Oregon Trail vision was to find a better life; the mission was to travel by wagon from Missouri to Oregon.

For a far, far more recent example of how a vision and mission relate — and how they translate into a motto or tagline — consider these statements from the business-oriented social-media network **LinkedIn**:

- **Vision:** To create economic opportunity for every professional in the world.
- **Mission:** To connect the world's professionals to make them more productive and successful.
- **Motto or tagline:** Relationships matter.

Focusing your vision

You probably have a vision of the good that you aim to achieve in your world. Likewise, you probably have a set of principles and values that guide how you operate and what you are and aren't willing to do to achieve success.

If you haven't already done so, commit your vision and values to words. They're fundamental to what you stand for and they guide development of your brand image.

The values you value

Start by clarifying your *values* — your beliefs about your responsibility to others. This worksheet can guide your thinking.

VALUES WORKSHEET		
<i>Use the provided values as a point from which to launch your thinking as you list all the values that steer your decision-making and the direction of your organization. After you compile a list of all values you believe play a significant role in your business decisions and plans, put a check mark alongside the few that you feel take precedence over all others.</i>		
<input type="checkbox"/> Satisfied customers	<input type="checkbox"/> Maximum profits	<input type="checkbox"/> Long-term success
<input type="checkbox"/> Enjoyable business atmosphere	<input type="checkbox"/> Healthy, satisfied, fulfilled employees	<input type="checkbox"/> Dominant market position
<input type="checkbox"/> Leading technologies and innovations	<input type="checkbox"/> Industry and market recognition	<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental protection
<input type="checkbox"/> Product quality	<input type="checkbox"/> Ethical standards	<input type="checkbox"/> Contribution to community
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____

Credit: Barbara Findlay Schenck



REMEMBER

Your statement of values can take the form of a simple list that declares the principles that steer your strategies and decisions. For example, the Whole Foods website dedicates a page to a list of the company's core values, including the following:

- Sell the highest quality natural and organic products available.
- Satisfy, delight, and nourish our customers.
- Support team member excellence and happiness.
- Create wealth through profits and growth.
- Serve and support our local and global communities.

Your highest hopes and aspirations

Your *vision statement* puts into a single sentence the reason your business exists. Regardless of whether you relocate, make operational changes, update your logo, revise your marketing message, or undertake other strategic or tactical changes, the vision of what you're aiming to achieve — the good you intend to do in your world — should remain stable.



TIP

Many organizations post their vision statements on their corporate websites. Following are a few examples:

- **TED Global Community:** To make great ideas accessible and to spark conversation.
- **Habitat For Humanity:** A world where everyone has a decent place to live.

As you develop your own vision statement, consider these questions:

- What makes you and those in your organization want to go to work every day? You could earn a living at any number of places, so what is it about the vision and purpose of what you do that keeps you loyal and motivated?
- What change are you aiming to affect in your world? What lasting difference do you want to make?
- What ultimate benefits do your products and services deliver?

Use your answers to compile a vision statement that summarizes what you feel is the highest purpose you (for personal brands) or your business aim for.

Define your mission

Your vision is your ultimate dream; your mission is how you'll achieve your aspirations. There's no one format to follow in writing your business mission, but it's important to address the following points:

- Who you serve
- How you are unique
- What value, benefits, or greater good you promise

Your statement doesn't have to look just like anyone else's. For instance, the Instagram mission statement is one sentence long:

To capture and share the world's moments.

The Peace Corps mission lists three goals:

- 1 Helping the people of interested countries in meeting their needs for trained men and women.
- 2 Helping promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the people served.
- 3 Helping promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of all Americans.



TIP

Here are some questions to help focus your thinking, along with a framework for assembling your mission statement.

STATING YOUR MISSION WORKSHEET
In a sentence, how do you describe what your company does?
In a phrase, what product or service do you offer?
In a phrase, what group of people do you serve?
What benefits or positive outcome do you promise to those you serve?
When thinking about your offerings compared to competitive offerings, what words would those who know your business well use to explain how you are different or better?
<p align="center">Mission Statement Framework</p> <p>[<i>Name of your business</i>] provides [<i>description of the product or service your business offers</i>] for [<i>describe the group of people you serve</i>] who seek [<i>define the positive benefit you deliver</i>] and who prefer our solution over available alternatives because we [<i>describe your point of difference as described in Chapter 5</i>]</p>

Credit: Barbara Findlay Schenck

How to Assemble a Branding Team



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Unless you're building a personal brand, to paraphrase an old coaching adage, there's no "I" in the branding team. Everyone in your organization plays an important role because your brand is reinforced or weakened every single time people come in contact with any facet of your organization.

The following tips help you when putting together a cohesive branding team:

- **Start by gaining buy-in from owners and leaders.** Without participation and leadership from those in a position to make strategic business decisions, a brand is in danger of a credibility train wreck.
- **Involve and enlist the support of top-level executives.** A brand needs to be reinforced through every business decision. For that reason, it needs to have the interest and engagement of those who call the shots to keep the company true to its brand premise and promise.
- **Gain organization-wide brand awareness and commitment.** Every single person who has any form of customer contact — whether before, during, or after the purchase — is in a position to strengthen or weaken brand trust and belief in your brand promise. Gain all-important commitment by educating everyone from the CEO to part-time or freelance contractors about your brand strategy, promise, identity, and presentation guidelines.

Turn them into brand champions and ensure that they know the rules for presenting your brand by managing your logo and staying true to your brand promise.



REMEMBER

As you set out to create or revamp your brand, include representatives from all areas of your organization. Then, at key milestones along the way, involve your entire team in updates and to share the rewards of a brand well built. Commit the time and effort it takes to put everyone on the same branding page — because what they don't know *can* hurt you.

