

Developing Your Purpose

Finding your purpose or your company's purpose does not need to be complex and arduous. And being able to articulate your company's purpose in one sentence enables your team to understand it and identify with it. Operating a business on a 'higher purpose' gives your team a chance to engage from the heart and not just the head.

Your company's purpose is different from your vision. Vision is what you are trying to achieve. Purpose is why that matters. When people feel their work matters, they feel they matter. That connection is paramount for a high performing team.

Here's a short formula to help you on your way. This method does not need to be 'the' answer but can help you flush out something to get you started.

1. What are the three core talents or skills your company most like to use, in the form of nouns (e.g. communication skills, design skills etc):

a

.

b

.

c.

2. List up to three activities your company like doing that best express the above skills, in the form of a word ending in "ing" (e.g. motivational speaking):

a

.

b

.

c

.

3. Describe in 10 words your company's view of an ideal world, in a sentence beginning with, "Our ideal world is one in which...."

4. Now put the above work together into a "statement of purpose" using the structure below. This will serve as your starting point. Take some time to edit until it feels right. It does not need to stay in the same structure if you feel it is better changed:
- a) We will use our (list the three talents)
 - b) By (list the three activities)
 - c) To create a world that (write the ideal vision)

5. From the outcome you've created, can you narrow it further? Make it more succinct?

Here are some examples of clear and succinct Purpose statements from companies you know.

Patagonia

Purpose Statement: "We're in business to save our home planet."

Explanation: Patagonia focuses on environmental sustainability, emphasizing their commitment to protecting the planet through their business practices.

Google

Purpose Statement: "To organize the world's information and make it universally accessible and useful."

Explanation: Google's purpose highlights their mission to make information available to everyone, reflecting their core business of search and information accessibility.

Tesla

Purpose Statement: "To accelerate the world's transition to sustainable energy."

Explanation: Tesla's purpose is centered on promoting sustainable energy solutions, which aligns with their innovative electric vehicles and energy products.

IKEA

Purpose Statement: "To create a better everyday life for the many people."

Explanation: IKEA's purpose focuses on improving daily life for a broad audience, reflecting their commitment to affordable and functional home furnishings.

Nike

Purpose Statement: "To bring inspiration and innovation to every athlete* in the world. (*If you have a body, you are an athlete.)"

Explanation: Nike's purpose is inclusive and empowering, emphasizing their dedication to innovation and inspiration in sports and fitness for everyone.

Some other questions to consider in refining your purpose.

- 1) If your company was to be shut down tomorrow, what hole would be left in the marketplace?
- 2) What is the primary problem your company solves?
- 3) Picture 5yrs into the future, your company has won a prestigious award for “Best Company in [your country]”. After accepting the award you are being interviewed and the interviewer asks “In all you’ve achieved in your industry the last 5yrs, what are you most proud of” ... how would you answer that question?

The 5 why’s method

Start with something simple like “We build websites.” Then keep asking “Why is that important?” until you hit the emotional core. The fifth “why” usually gets you to something like:

“To give small business owners the confidence and credibility to go after their dreams.”

That’s purpose.