

Private: How to write vision and mission statements

Your vision statement describes how things would look if the issues important to your organisation and community were completely and perfectly addressed. Your mission statement is a practical and action focused sentence outlining what your organisation does to achieve your vision.

Your vision statement is about the future. It paints a picture of what your organisation wants to become, achieve and change. A vision statement should inspire and challenge employees, board members, clients and other stakeholders.

Once you have your vision statement, use it as the basis for your mission statement. **Your mission statement is the practical 'how to' in achieving your vision for the future.**

Writing your vision statement

The vision statement is at the heart of the organisation and is something to strive towards. It describes how things would look if the issues important to your organisation and community were completely and perfectly addressed.

A good example is the TasCOSS vision statement:

One Tasmania, free of poverty and inequality where everyone has the same opportunity.

Decide on the focus of your organisation

To start thinking about a vision statement you need to be clear about the focus of your organisation.

Ask these questions to help find your focus:

- What specific group do you provide service to?
- What are the specific services you provide?
- What is the location of these services?
- What is unique about your organisation?

These can be answered by the board, senior management team, staff, clients and volunteers. Once you are clear about your focus, you are ready to move onto the next step.

To develop your vision statement ask yourself 'What are the values of this organisation? What do we want to solve? How do we stay aligned with our values to achieve this?'

Combined with the focus you originally developed, bring in the feedback offered by your key stakeholders to build a picture of what the organisation is all about.

Fill your vision statement with passion and emotion. It needs to be only one sentence. It needs to be readable, and understandable, and it should be something that people can relate to. Use the present tense, even though this is a future focused statement.

It might be useful to get help from a professional writer in putting together your vision statement. They will help you avoid jargon and ensure that the statement is easy to understand. You can also use a readability tool (there is one available in Word documents).

Writing your mission statement

Your **mission statement** states your organisation's purpose: what it does, why and how? It is a practical and action focused sentence outlining what you do to achieve your vision.

The process of writing your mission statement is much like that for developing your vision statement. The same brainstorming process can help you come up with ideas for the mission statement. It will usually be one sentence, though you may need two statements to ensure you meet your vision statement.

After brainstorming possible statements, you will want to ask of each statement:

- Does it describe what the organisation will do and why it will do it?
- What do we need to do to ensure that our vision can become a reality?
- Is it concise?
- Is it outcome oriented?
- Is it inclusive of the goals and people who may become involved in the organisation?

Together, your organisation can decide on a statement that best meets these criteria.

You might find it useful to get help from a professional writer in putting together your mission statement. They will help avoid jargon and ensure that the statement is easy to understand. You can also use a readability tool (there is one available in Word documents).

Gather input

You will need to design a process to get input from key stakeholders. Apart from your board, staff, and volunteers key stakeholders can include:

- clients and consumer groups
- funding bodies and donors
- partner organisations, including referral sources
- competitors, other organisations providing the same services
- other community members

Ways to gather input from your key stakeholders include:

- surveys
- focus groups
- workshops
- interviews

Provide key stakeholders with the information about the focus of your organisation. Then ask open questions such as 'what issues do we need to deal with?' and 'what would be the ideal for our target group?' This should give you ideas about how things would look if the issues were completely resolved.

There are a number of How To's related to these methods. Refer to [How to plan and run a focus group](#), and [How to create a survey](#) to get started.

Get support for your vision and mission statements

Once you have created the vision and mission statements, test them out with your key stakeholders – are they understandable, is it doable?

After receiving feedback, make any needed changes and check in again.

Decide how you will use your vision and mission statements

Now you have developed your vision and mission statements they need to be seen. They focus on what is important to your organisation and provide a clear direction for the organisation.

You can use your vision and mission statements in many ways:

- on your website
- on organisational signage, flyers or letterheads
- on the staff notice board
- as opening slide on presentations
- in your foyer, reception or waiting room
- as a basis of your organisations annual key performance indicators
- each time you review your strategic plan
- in your annual report.

Review

Your vision and mission statements need to be reviewed regularly to ensure they stay up to date and grow with the organisation. If the focus of your organisation changes or develops, it's time to develop a new vision statement. If your vision statement changes, your mission statement also needs to change.

Referenced links

- [How to plan and run a focus group](#)
- [How to create a survey](#)