

# INTRO TO MISSION STATEMENTS

## MISSION STATEMENT DEFINITION

A one-sentence statement describing the reason your organization or program exists. (what you do + who/what you do this for)

## PRIMARY AUDIENCES & FUNCTIONS OF A MISSION STATEMENT



### EXTERNAL

Inform Others of  
What You Do

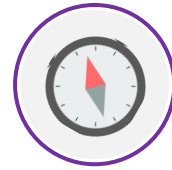
Your mission statement is a great way to summarize what your org is about, providing context for follow up information on programs and services.



### STAFF & VOLUNTEERS

Focus & Motivate  
Your Team

People want to believe in the work they do. Your mission statement should be easy for staff & volunteers to understand, remember, and own.



### LEADERSHIP

Guide Strategic  
Planning & Decisions

By definition, you cannot prioritize everything. Your mission statement should serve as your guiding star when considering priorities and new initiatives.

## GUIDELINES YOUR MISSION STATEMENT SHOULD FOLLOW



### Clear (Easy to Understand)

This is not a time to show off your vocabulary. Use concrete language and keep things simple. Try to keep to an 8<sup>th</sup> grade reading level, don't exceed 10<sup>th</sup> grade.



### Concise (Short & To-the-Point)

Don't fall prey to buzzwords, adjective strings and fluff. Aim for 5-14 words, 20 max. This is often the hardest part, but anything longer and you undermine its utility.



### Useful (Inform. Focus. Guide.)

It doesn't matter how short, clear or cute your phrase is if it fails to inform others about what you do and focus and guide internal team members and decisions.

# MISSION BUILDING BLOCKS & FRAMEWORKS

Rather than starting with an unstructured brainstorming session, we find it helps to take a step back and start with the different mission statement building blocks and frameworks.

## The Simplest Approach

The most straight forward approach is to pair high-level actions with a targeted beneficiary.

ACTION(S)

TARGETED BENEFICIARIES

The protection of all native animals and plants in their natural communities – Defenders of Wildlife  
To serve individuals and families in the poorest communities in the world – CARE  
Lift the spirits of America's troops and their families – USO  
To inspire and empower people affected by cancer – Livestrong

## Examples of Alternate Frameworks

In addition to actions and targeted beneficiaries, some other possible building blocks include services, partners, causes, and problems. In order to keep things clear and concise, we recommend not exceeding more than 4 or 5 building blocks and no more than one word string (e.g. inspire and empower...OR...poverty, hunger, and social injustice).

ACTION(S)

SERVICE(S)

TARGETED BENEFICIARIES

Bringing clean, safe drinking water to people in developing countries – charity: water

ACTION(S)

SERVICE(S)

PROBLEM(S)

To create lasting solutions to poverty, hunger, and social injustice – Oxfam

ACTION(S)

BENEFICIARIES

SERVICE(S)

ACTION(S)

PROBLEM(S)

To connect people through lending to alleviate poverty – Kiva

ACTION(S)

BENEFICIARIES

ACTION(S)

PROBLEM(S)

Celebrating animals and confronting cruelty – The Humane Society

ACTION(S)

TARGETED BENEFICIARIES

CAUSE

Working to achieve lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender equality – Human Rights Campaign

ACTION(S)

CAUSE

TARGETED BENEFICIARIES

To inspire conservation of the oceans – Monterey Bay Aquarium

# ONE-PAGE MISSION STATEMENT WORKSHEET

## Guidelines for selecting and completing each building block

- Choose 2-4 building blocks. 5 max.
- 5-14 words total. 20 max.
- 1 word string (A, B, & C). Choose wisely.
- 8<sup>th</sup> grade reading level. 10<sup>th</sup> grade max.
- Target < 20 syllables total. 30 max.
- Avoid long or complicated words

\* **ACTION(S)** High level action verb(s) to kick things off. "To \_\_\_\_\_ ..."

List options. Circle your top 1 or 2.

\* **TARGETED BENEFICIARIES** The who/what that benefits from your work the most.

Super-Short Version (1-3 words)

Somewhat Short Version (4-8 words)

**SERVICE(S)** What service(s) do you provide?

**PROBLEM(S)** What problems does your products or services solve?

**CAUSE** Is there an overarching cause you support?

**PARTNERS** Are there any non-standard partners that are critical to your model?

\* Indicates strongly recommended. All others optional.

Now on a separate piece of paper or whiteboard, string selected blocks into a draft mission statement. Continue refining and compressing until the result fits within guidelines.

# ONE-PAGE VISION STATEMENT WORKSHEET

## VISION STATEMENT DEFINITION

A short phrase describing the future you are ultimately working towards (i.e. your final destination or desired end state)

## HOW A VISION STATEMENT DIFFERS FROM A MISSION STATEMENT.

Mission statements and vision statements are complementary but unique.

### MISSION

- Present tense
- Describes what you do and who/what benefits from this work



### VISION

- Future Objective
- Description of a future you are ultimately working towards

Example from **MISSION:** *To create lasting solutions to poverty, hunger, and social injustice.*



**OXFAM**

**VISION:** *A just world without poverty.*

## GUIDELINES YOUR VISION STATEMENT SHOULD FOLLOW

### Clear (Easy to Understand)

- Simple and concrete language
- 8<sup>th</sup> grade reading level. 10<sup>th</sup> max
- Avoid buzzwords and jargon

### Concise (Sort & To the Point)

- 5-14 words (20 max)
- Avoid words > 12 letters or 4 syllables
- No more than 1 word string (A, B, and C)

## BRAINSTORMING QUESTIONS

What would the world look like if this problem was solved?

If you were completely successful, what would this look like for you and your customers?

(Rare) Do you want to self impose a timeline? (Good for urgency. Awkward if not achieved.)