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& The Business Shed

- A Creative Initiative

Creating a Mission Statement

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One of the keys to success is not only creating a mission statement, but in living it out in the daily life of the organisation.

Every company or organisation, no matter how small or big, needs a mission statement – it is a source of direction and gives everyone an opportunity to know what the organisation is about – and indeed what it is not about.

A good mission statement, which is a crucial element in the strategic planning of a business, identifies the major reason the organisation exists. It has been derived from a series of questions – why do we exist, what is our business, what are we trying to achieve, what are the values we hold important?

Creating a mission statement can help you focus your business effort and do a lot of good in bringing your workforce together behind a common theme. The key to success is not just creating a mission statement; it is living the mission statement daily in the life of the organisation.

A mission statement communicates the organisation's core beliefs and visionary goals and often contains three components:

- Core Values to which the organisation is committed;
- Core purpose of the organisation;
- Visionary Goals the organisation will pursue to fulfil its mission.

Values and purpose remain relatively constant during an organisation's lifetime.

Some examples of core values are:

- Excellent customer service
- Creativity
- Integrity
- Social responsibility
- Environmental responsibility
- Pioneering technology

Core purpose is the reason the organisation exists. It is often an idealistic reason for being and is discovered by asking "why" to a number of first-pass questions.

An example could be of a Market Research Company – it exists to provide data to customer of what is out there in the market – but, why does it do this work?

To develop your Mission Statement, there are some basic steps that need to be taken.

Your mission statement should:

- Include the reason for your business
- Identify your firm's unique 'value added'
- Reflect your firm's core business activity
- Provide a focus
- Identify the purpose you fulfil

Step One

Identify those people who are directly affected by the organisations successes and failures – these would be employees, internal and external customers, financial institutions, shareholders, suppliers, even the families of employees might be included.

Identify the products and services you supply – these might be actual things you sell, but could also include in-

house training, induction workshops, newsletters to employees.

Identify the "value-add" – the key advantage your organisation provides over its competitors – why do your customers come to you? What makes your company special? Why are your employees working for you? Are you an employer of choice?

Step Two

Work out a first draft – keep it simple.

XYZ Company meets all the plumbing needs of the local area specifically the town by providing real good quality workmanship and by using top of the range products at prices that everyone can afford and at which we make a profit.

You will find, though, that you probably something even longer and more un-focused.

Step Three

Refine it, re-draft it. Is it too verbose, too clumsy, is it true? Do you want to tell people you make a large profit? Is it a true mission statement rather than a goal, or indeed a set of goals? Does it truly describe what the organisation does, and where the business focus and effort is?

Importantly:

- Does it inspire?
- Is it unique?

Simply: (Your Organisation) meets the (products and services) needs of (stakeholders) by (value-add).

Step Four

Make it visible – communicate it – send it to everyone in the organisation for review. Pick some important and trusted customers – talk it through with them. Does it show them that you walk the talk?

Step Five

Live it – easy if you've involved as many within the organisation in the process.

In summary, a mission statement will tell you about the current direction and objectives of the organisation. By understanding the mission, everyone in the organisation will know and understand the role they play in achieving the necessary results.

Creating Possibilities and Finding Solutions
