

Strategic Plans, Action Plans, Business Plans

Mission, Vision, Values Statements

Each statement—a mission statement, a vision statement and a values statement—has its own distinct function in the strategic planning process.

A **mission statement** explains the company's (or department's) **reason for existence**. It describes the company (or department), what it does and its overall intention. The mission statement supports the vision and serves to communicate purpose and direction to employees, customers, vendors and other stakeholders. The mission can change to reflect a company's (or department's) priorities and methods to accomplish its vision (See, Company Mission Statement Examples).

A **vision statement** describes the organization as it would appear in a **future successful state**. When developing a vision statement, try to answer this question: If the organization were to achieve all of its strategic goals, what would it look like 10 years from now? An effective vision statement is inspirational and aspirational. It creates a mental image of the future state that the organization wishes to achieve. A vision statement should challenge and inspire employees.

A **values statement** describes what the organization **believes** in and how it will **behave**. Not all organizations create or are able to uphold a values statement. In a values-led company, the values create a moral compass for the company and its employees. This compass guides decision-making and establishes a standard that actions can be assessed against. A values statement defines the deeply held beliefs and principles of the organizational culture. These core values are an internalized framework that is shared and acted on by leadership.

Management cannot create a new values statement and expect the values to simply become core values for the organization. For an organization to have an effective values statement, it must fully embrace its values and use them to guide its attitudes, actions and decision-making on a daily basis. Developing a values-led organization can be a difficult and slow process that should be attempted only by organizations that are willing and prepared to make a long-term commitment to the established company values.