

How to write your vision and mission statements (with examples).



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For even the most experienced charity leaders, there is often confusion surrounding vision and mission statements. What are they? What are the differences between them? What is their role in the strategic planning process?

In this article, we explain the key principles behind an effective vision and mission statement, why they are important to your organisation, and how you can approach writing your own.

Vision vs mission statements: what are they and how are they different?

A vision statement describes the long-term aspirations of your organisation. It paints a picture of how the world will look once you have achieved your mission: directing you towards a clearly defined destination.

It is typically short, simple, and easy for your team and supporters to remember. It should also be inspiring and challenging – articulating the fundamental difference you will make to the world.

A few great vision statement examples that we have come across are:

Building a future in which people live in harmony with nature. - WWF

A world of hope, inclusion, and social justice, where poverty has been overcome and all people live in dignity and security. - CARE International

Unpaid carers are heard and valued, with access to support, advice, and resources to enable them to live fulfilled lives – Carers Trust



A mission statement outlines the reason for your organisation's existence and reflects your core values. It articulates what your charity does, who you do it for and how you do it. Some organisations may refer to their mission statement as their 'purpose'.

A well-crafted mission statement should be specific and action-oriented, providing the roadmap to achieving your vision. Within the statement, information on where the organisation is based, and its target beneficiaries can also be included.

Some mission statement examples that we like include:

We're here every day and night of the year for anyone struggling to cope. We make sure people have somewhere to turn and support when they need it most. We work with communities to let people know we're here for them and we campaign to make suicide prevention a priority. - Samaritans

Together, we create joy, happiness and magical memories through life-changing wishes for children with critical illnesses. - Make A Wish

A key difference between the statements is the timeframe. A vision statement will express what scenario in the future your organisation is aiming to achieve, whereas your mission statement will describe what you are doing now to reach your goal. In essence, your vision statement is internally focused on what you are going to achieve, and your mission statement is public facing, describing how you are going to do it.

Benefits of effective vision and mission statements

Uniting your organisation towards a common goal

Probably the most important benefit of having a clearly defined vision and mission is that it creates a sense of intentionality: your vision specifies the destination, and your mission lays out the path to get there. Charities often engage a complex system of stakeholders in their strategic planning process, including programme delivery teams, trustees, volunteers, funders, and beneficiaries. Your vision and mission statements can be incredibly valuable when it comes to getting everyone on board and pulling in the same direction.

Streamlining the decision-making process

When faced with challenges, your vision and mission statements can provide a reference point for decision-makers to determine the best course of action at every level of the organisation. This will help to ensure that all decisions are aligned with your overarching purpose and contribute towards achieving your vision.

Building a strong and consistent brand

Finally, having a clear vision and mission can help to build your brand. When a charity's vision and mission align with its actions and behaviour, it builds a strong sense of identity which resonates with your stakeholders and the wider world. Stakeholders will then also use the statements to promote your charity while networking and forming strategic alliances or partnerships.



How to write your vision and mission statements

Every team will take a different approach to vision and mission development, but we have a couple of recommendations to help you get started:

- Involve your team and stakeholders. To make sure your vision and mission statements are as representative as possible, consult your stakeholders throughout the process.
- Know what makes your organisation special. Understand the unique value you offer to the world and make that the focal point of your vision and mission.
- Keep the statements concise. Your vision and mission statements should be easy to understand and remember. Avoid over-complicated language or jargon.
- Test it out. Once you have drafted your statements, test them out on your team, volunteers, beneficiaries, and supporters. Ask for feedback and adjust as necessary.

Your vision and mission statements form the centrepiece of your strategic plan – their importance cannot be overstated. However, by breaking the process down into simple steps, developing your vision and mission can also be incredibly exciting. The outcome is an image of the world you could build through your work, and a clear roadmap to make this a reality.

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