

Mission & Vision Statements: What is the difference between mission, vision and 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.

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.

Handout 3

Ten Dimensions of Organizational Climate

Dimension	Definition
Collegiality	The extent to which staff are friendly, supportive, and trusting of one another. The peer cohesion and esprit de corps of the group.
Professional Growth	The degree of emphasis placed on staff's professional growth. The availability of opportunities to increase professional competence.
Supervisor Support	The degree of facilitative leadership providing encouragement, support, and clear expectations.
Clarity	The extent to which policies, procedures, and responsibilities are clearly defined and communicated.
Reward System	The degree of fairness and equity in the distribution of pay, fringe benefits, and opportunities for advancement.
Decision Making	The degree of autonomy given to staff and the extent to which they are involved in centerwide decisions.
Goal Consensus	The extent to which staff agree on the philosophy, goals, and educational objectives of the center.
Task Orientation	The emphasis placed on organizational effectiveness and efficiency, including productive meetings, program outcomes, and accountability.
Physical Setting	The extent to which the spatial arrangement of the center helps or hinders staff in carrying out their responsibilities. The availability of supplies and materials.
Innovativeness	The extent to which the center adapts to change and encourages staff to find creative ways to solve problems.

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Handout 4

Early Childhood Work Environment Survey

Short Version

This survey is designed to find out how you feel about this early childhood center as a place to work. The success of the survey depends on your candid and honest responses. Please know that your answers are completely confidential; you do not need to sign the form. When you have completed the questionnaire, put it in the attached plain envelope, seal it, and give it to your staff representative.

Indicate in the space provided the numeral (0-5) that most accurately describes how you feel about each statement.

Never 0	Seldom 1	Sometimes 2	Somewhat regularly 3	Frequently 4	Always 5

What three words describe the climate of this center as a place to work?

What do you perceive to be the center's greatest strengths?

What areas do you feel could use some improvement?

Thank you!

Mission – Vision – Values: Toward Common Definitions

In working with organizations over the last three decades, we have learned that there is sometimes considerable ambiguity about what represents the core planning elements—or what we call “foundations”—for an organization. Specifically, we have seen the definitions of “Mission” and “Vision” interchanged between different organizations.

Our belief is that clarity and consistency are helpful in setting consistent direction and in beginning to align how organizations use these terms in planning. To begin to operationalize this belief, we have created the following definitions which have guided our support of numerous organizations’ planning efforts over the last twenty-five years.

Definition of a Mission

A mission is a *statement of the reason or reasons for the existence of the organization, the ultimate purpose the organization serves in society, and the boundaries within which it operates.* A mission is one of the four key building blocks of an organizational plan. The other three are vision, goals, and strategy. A mission sets direction and defines the boundaries, both of which are critical to the organization's effectiveness and success.

Definition of a Vision

If the mission describes your reason for being, then the vision describes what you want to become or how you want to be. It is the “dream” toward which you are moving. You hear star baseball players talk about as children seeing themselves on the pitcher’s mound or at the plate in the World Series or football players envisioning playing quarterback in the Super Bowl. Those are visions.

Definition of Values

Values include beliefs and attitudes that guide behavior and relationships with others. They are often unspoken as well as difficult to universally define. For example, one value a team might choose is “respect.” You can look up the definition in the dictionary, but the key question is how the team demonstrates respect for other members of the team and for those outside the team with whom they deal.

Some possible values in the work place include:

- Respect
- Integrity
- Loyalty
- Innovation
- Honesty
- Trust
- Cooperation
- Quality