

# Nonprofit Vision and Mission Statement Worksheet

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The importance of both mission and vision statements starts with the “Why.” In his book, [Start with Why](#), Simon Sinek shares his theory of the [Golden Circle](#): Every person knows what they do; some people know how they do it. But few people know why they do it. Yet the “Why” is the purpose and the driving factor of our work. All too often we start with the outer circle of “What.” Instead, we need to start from the center and move outwards with regards to our mission and vision statements. Explain why you want to do what you do, then how you will do it, and finally what end goal you are aiming to achieve.

We can look at [Google Trends](#) to see the difference between searches for mission v.s. vision statements. And what we see is that, more often than not, we are [overusing the term “mission statement.”](#) In the order of importance, we should look at values, then vision, followed by mission, then objectives, and, finally, key performance indicators (KPIs). The values of your organization help you to write your vision, which your mission, objectives, and KPIs will then aim to accomplish.

This worksheet will help you to differentiate between your vision and your mission, to gather input from different members of your team, and finally to write both separate statements.

## Vision vs. Mission Brainstorm

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Answer the following questions:

- 1) What is the name of your organization?

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- 2) Why does your organization exist?

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- 3) What is the problem you are trying to solve?

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- 4) What are your major programs and services?

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- 5) What purpose do they serve?

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- 6) What does your organization do on an average day?

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- 7) What numerical or statistical goals are you trying to reach in 1-5 years?

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- 8) What numerical or statistical goals are you trying to reach in 100 years?

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- 9) Who or what is your work serving?

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10) Why are you working for those people/animals or that cause?

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11) What is your current vision statement (if you have one)?

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12) What is your current mission statement (if you have one)?

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## How to write a vision statement

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Your vision statement is a view of how the world should be as a result of your work. It should be short (i.e., one sentence), but also inspiring, memorable, and able to remain unchanged for 100 years.

Refer to your answers to questions 1, 2, 3, 8, 9, 11 in the brainstorm above. Then, answer the following question in 2 sentences:

**Without revealing how, what is our organization working to accomplish?**

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Now, shorten what you've just written into 140 characters:

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The shortened version is your vision statement!

## Mission statement generator

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Refer to your answers to questions 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, and 12 in the brainstorm above. Fill in the blanks below with nouns or verbs that relate to your organization's vision and work.

Hint: Refer to the words you used in your brainstorm above. Depending on your organization's vision and programs, some portions of this fill-in-the-blank exercise are listed as optional. Short-and-sweet is the name of the game with mission statements, so if referring to another program or goal feels redundant or superfluous, then skip it!

- 1) Noun: Impact or change you hope to see in world

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- 2) Noun: Impact or change you hope to see in world (optional)

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- 3) Verb: Variation on vision statement

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- 4) Verb: SMART goal

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- 5) Verb: SMART goal (optional)

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- 6) Noun: Program or service

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- 7) Noun: Program or service (optional)

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- 8) Noun: Program or service (optional)

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9) Verb: Variation on vision statement

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Share the portion above with other members of your team to get more ideas. Once you get a few different responses, review them to see what words were repeated: That's where your mission is clear to your team!

Also, look for variations: Is there anything there that you totally disagree with, or anything that you missed? Discuss with your team, and then put it all together into a coherent mission statement:

We believe in \_(1)\_\_\_\_\_ and \_(2)\_\_\_\_\_.

In order to \_(3)\_\_\_\_\_, we \_(4)\_\_\_\_\_ and

\_(5)\_\_\_\_\_. By \_(6)\_\_\_\_\_, \_(7)\_\_\_\_\_.

and \_(8)\_\_\_\_\_ we work to

\_(9)\_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_.

Way to go! Now you have a vision and mission statement. For inspiration to take yours to the next level, refer to some of our favorite nonprofit examples on the next page.

## Nonprofit Examples

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### Vision Statements

#### [The Trevor Project](#)

**Vision:** “The mission of The Trevor Project is to end suicide among gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and questioning young people.”

#### [BAM](#)

**Vision:** “To be the home for adventurous artists, audiences, and ideas.”

#### [Museum of Indian Arts and Culture](#)

**Vision:** “A world that recognizes and understands Native peoples as diverse tribes, each with a distinctive history, culture, and language, and each of which is an integral part of the vibrant, historical, and cultural landscape of the American Southwest.”

#### [Amnesty International](#)

**Vision:** “Our vision is a world in which every person enjoys all of the human rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights standards.”

#### [Conservation International](#)

**Vision:** “We imagine a healthy, prosperous world in which societies are forever committed to caring for and valuing nature, for the long-term benefit of people and all life on Earth.”

### Mission Statements

#### [Polar Bears International](#)

**Mission:** “Our mission is to conserve polar bears and the sea ice they depend on. Through media, science, and advocacy, we work to inspire people to care about the Arctic, the threats to its future, and the connection between this remote region and our global climate.”

#### [TED](#)

**Mission:** “Spread ideas. TED is a global community, welcoming people from every discipline and culture who seek a deeper understanding of the world. We believe passionately in the power of ideas to change attitudes, lives and, ultimately, the world. On TED.com, we're building a clearinghouse of free knowledge from the world's most inspired thinkers — and a community

of curious souls to engage with ideas and each other, both online and at TED and TEDx events around the world, all year long.”

### [Faith Matters Network](#)

**Mission:** “As a people of color led collective, Faith Matters Network trains, connects, convenes, and amplifies marginalized people of faith, primarily people of color, to chart a new moral horizon.”

### [USA for UNHCR](#)

**Mission:** “USA for UNHCR helps and protects refugees and people displaced by violence, conflict and persecution. Supporting UNHCR – the UN Refugee Agency – and its partners, we provide lifesaving essentials including shelter, water, food, safety and protection. Around the world, we help refugees survive, recover and build a better future. Together we give refugees the hope they deserve, restore their dignity and help them rebuild their lives.”

### [Karam Foundation](#)

**Mission:** “Karam Foundation is a non-profit organization dedicated to help people help themselves. We seek to restore the dignity and quality of life for people affected by conflict by eliminating barriers to success through innovative education, entrepreneurial development, and community-driven aid. Guided by the aspirations of the people we serve, we pursue this mission with compassion, transparency, and generosity.”



## Resources

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[Simon Sinek: The Golden Circle](#)

[Nonprofit Mission Statements vs. Vision Statements](#)

[5 of our favorite nonprofit vision statements — and what you can learn from them](#)

[5 of our favorite nonprofit mission statements — and what you can learn from them](#)

[Impact and Capacity Building with Whole Whale](#)