

Nonprofit Vision and Mission Statement Worksheet

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.”](#) 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, and ultimately 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

Answer the following questions:

- 1) What is the name of your organization?

Your Vision

- 2) Why does your organization exist?

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

- 4) What are you trying to achieve in the next 100 years?

- 5) How will the world look if you're successful?

Your Mission

- 6) Who or what is your work serving?

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

- 8) What are you trying to achieve for them?

- 9) How will you achieve it? What are your major programs and/or services?

10) What is their purpose?

11) What does your organization do on an average day to achieve this?

Bonus: Your KPIs

12) What measurable progress are you trying to achieve in the next 1-5 years?

CURRENT MISSION & VISION STATEMENTS

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

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

How to write a vision statement

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.

The vision is your destination. It captures what you are working towards -- the big, huge, ambitious impact you want to make on the world.

To create your vision, refer to your answers to questions 1-5 in the brainstorm above. Then, answer the following question in 2 sentences:

Why does your organization exist?

Now, shorten what you've just written into 140 characters, and complete this sentence: **Our vision is a world where...**

The shortened version is your vision statement!

How to write a mission statement

Your mission is the journey for how you'll achieve your vision. It hones in on your organization's goals, strategies, and the community that you serve to define the fundamental purpose of your organization. An effective mission statement must answer the following:

- Who do you exist for?
- What are you trying to achieve for them?
- How will you achieve it?

Put another way, your mission statement is a short, direct and compelling way to state your “theory of change” or the core strategy behind your organization and your unique path toward your vision. It provides the link between what you do day-to-day and what you hope to achieve long-term. Your mission may evolve over time depending on where your journey takes you.

To begin, refer to your answers to questions 6-11 in the brainstorm above. Fill in the blanks below to craft your perfect mission statement. Remember to keep it short, clear, and simple!

- 1) **Impact:** What is the change you want to create in the world, beginning with an action verb (e.g. discover life-saving treatments)?

- 2) **Audience:** Who is the specific community that you serve or want to create change for (e.g. women and girls in developing countries)?

- 3) **Action(s):** What 1-3 core strategies does your organization use to make progress towards your vision and create your impact, starting with “ing” verbs (e.g. providing free services, advocating for legal rights, funding research, etc.)

(1) _____

(2) _____

(3) _____



Now, shorten what you've just written into the following statement:

Our mission is to...

for...

by...

and _____.

Congratulations! This shortened version is your mission statement!

***PRO TIP:**

Share the survey and fill in the blank portions above with other members of your team to get more ideas from across your organization. Once you get a few different responses, review them to see what words and themes 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 make adjustments as needed.

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

Vision Statements

[Habitat for Humanity](#)

Vision: “A world where everyone has a decent place to live.”

[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

[Karam Foundation](#)

Mission: “Karam Foundation seeks 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.”

[The Trevor Project](#)

Mission: “The mission of The Trevor Project is to end suicide among gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and questioning young people.” They do this by providing crisis counseling, offering resources, educating young people and adults, and advocating for laws and policies.

[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... Our agenda is to make great ideas accessible and spark conversation.”

[Faith Matters Network](#)

Mission: “Faith Matters Network catalyzes personal and social change by equipping community organizers, faith leaders, and activists with resources for connection, spiritual sustainability, and accompaniment.”

[USA for UNHCR](#)

Mission: “USA for UNHCR protects refugees and empowers them with hope and opportunity. We are with refugees from their greatest time of need – from emergency or crisis and beyond through the months and likely years that many are displaced from their home countries. We give refugees the hope they deserve, restore their dignity and help them rebuild their lives.”

Resources

[SSIR: Mission Matters Most - 7 Characteristics to guide the most effective mission statements](#)

[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](#)