

Developing Your Mission Statement

Mission Statement

The mission statement is one of the most important parts of your business plan. It sums up your values, or vision, and the purpose of your business. It's helpful to begin by working on each of these segments individually.

Step 1 - Your Business Values

Business values established the philosophy of your business, and described the way employees and customers are treated. Doing business ethically and being honest exemplify values. You should incorporate a basic set of values into the mission for your business.

Step 2 - Your Vision

The vision of your business will define and shape its future. Base your vision statement on your business values and where you want the business to be 2 to 3 years in the future (e.g., stage of growth, position in the marketplace, etc.).

Step 3 - Purpose of Your Business

You should determine the purpose of your business in two ways. First, you should use an internal measure of success. Second, the only external purpose of any company is to serve the customer.

Try to integrate your values and vision when defining the purpose of your business together, they will provide the framework for your business concept.

Example: I love worms. The internal purpose of my business is that it will give me a chance to work with worms. The external purpose of my business is to provide composting, soil improvement, and fertilizer services to the area gardeners.

Step 4 - Your Mission Statement

A mission statement sums up all of the above elements: values (the philosophy of your business); vision (where are you going with your business); and purpose (what your business does to satisfy your internal measure of success *and* serve customers). It should be short

and focused (no more than 35 words). It is stated in the present tense, in positive terms, and without qualifiers.

Example: "Vulpinex Consulting helps its small-business clients to succeed by providing them with honest, ethical, affordable project implementation assistance in such areas as management training, merchandising, and business planning."

Many companies proudly display their mission statement in a place visible the customers and suppliers. Of course, posting it is easy. The challenge is to live up to it.

Getting Started

1. *What values would you like your business to be known for, now and in the future?*

2. *What is your vision for the future of your business?*

3. *What is the purpose of your business, internally and externally?*

4. My mission statement is:

(Write a one-or two-sentence mission statement about your business, comprising **no more than 35 words**. If necessary, write a longer statement and cut it down to size by removing adjectives, adverbs, and words between commas.)
