

Mission, Vision, Core Values and Strategy

Mission

why does a company or organisation exist for what purpose?

Vision

what is the picture of the organisation we want to achieve in the next e.g. 3 to 5 years?

Core Values

how do we want to act, and be seen to act?

Strategy

How do we achieve the above?

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What is 'Mission Statement'?

A **mission statement** is a concise declaration of an organization's core purpose and focus that normally remains unchanged over time. It serves to communicate the organization's objectives, its approach to achieving those objectives, and the overarching scope of its operations. It acts as a guide for the strategic planning and decision-making processes within the organization.

Key elements typically included in a mission statement are:

1. **Purpose:** Why the organization exists and what it aims to accomplish. This often includes a brief description of what the organization does and its primary goals.
2. **Target Audience:** Who the organization serves. This could be a specific demographic, customer base, or community.
3. **Commitment:** What the organization stands for, including its values and ethical commitments. This component often outlines how the organization differentiates itself from competitors.
4. **Strategy and Scope:** How the organization seeks to achieve its goals. This often involves a high-level description of the key strategies or methods the organization uses to meet its objectives.

Effective mission statements are clear, motivational, and reflect the essence of an organization. They are crucial for aligning the efforts of all members towards a common goal and providing stakeholders with a clear understanding of the organization's direction and purpose.

What are Company 'Core Values'?

Company core values are the fundamental beliefs or guiding principles that define how a business operates and makes decisions. These values serve as the foundation of an organization's culture and identity, shaping its interactions with employees, customers, and the broader community. Core values help ensure that every member of the organization understands what is important, guiding their actions and behaviors in alignment with the company's overall mission.

Here are several key aspects of company core values:

1. **Guidance in Decision-Making:** Core values help companies make decisions that align with their overall identity and goals. They provide a framework for evaluating options and determining the best courses of action that are consistent with the company's ethos.

2. Culture Building: Core values are instrumental in building and maintaining a company culture. They influence the way employees interact with one another and with stakeholders, fostering an environment that reflects these values.

3. Employee Alignment and Engagement: By clearly articulating core values, companies can attract and retain employees who share these beliefs. This alignment enhances employee engagement and motivation, as individuals feel more connected to the purpose of the organization.

4. Brand Identity and Reputation: Core values shape how a company is perceived externally. They form a crucial part of the brand identity, influencing how customers and the public view the company. Adherence to core values can enhance a company's reputation, while discrepancies between stated values and actions can damage it.

5. Sustainability and Ethical Standards: Core values often include commitments to sustainability, ethics, and community involvement. These values commit the organization to higher standards of operation, which can lead to more sustainable and ethical business practices.

Examples of common core values include integrity, innovation, respect, excellence, and responsibility. Each organization will choose core values that reflect its unique mission and industry, ensuring they resonate authentically with its strategic objectives and operational ethos.

What is a companies Strategic Vision?

A company's strategic vision is a forward-looking statement that outlines what the organization aspires to become in the future. It serves as a guidepost for where the company is headed, offering a long-term perspective on its direction. The strategic vision is broader than specific goals or objectives; it is an inspirational and aspirational declaration meant to motivate and unify everyone in the organization.

Key Elements of a Strategic Vision

1. Aspirational Quality: A strategic vision is inherently aspirational, setting a desired future state that the company aims to achieve. It challenges the organization to grow and reach beyond its current capabilities.

2. Long-term Perspective: Unlike short-term goals, a strategic vision looks several years into the future, often outlining what the company hopes to achieve over a decade or more.

3. Guidance for Strategic Planning: The vision provides a framework for developing strategic plans. It helps in setting priorities, allocating resources, and aligning various departments and initiatives.

4. Motivation and Cohesion: A compelling strategic vision can inspire and motivate employees by providing a sense of purpose. It helps unify the workforce, aligning them around a common long-term goal.

5. Market Position and Competitive Advantage: The vision often includes an idea of how the company sees itself in relation to the market and competitors. It may articulate a unique position or competitive advantage the company aims to achieve.

6. Adaptability: While the vision is long-term, it should also allow for flexibility to adapt to changes in the market, technology, and society.

Examples

A strategic vision can vary widely depending on the industry, the size of the company, and its corporate culture.

For instance:

- A technology company might envision itself as the leader in innovation within its sector, developing cutting-edge products that transform how people interact with the world.
- A nonprofit organization might see itself as a key player in solving a global challenge, such as reducing poverty or curing a disease, by a specific future date.

Importance

The strategic vision is crucial because it provides a clear direction and a sense of purpose. It helps stakeholders understand the ultimate aims of the company and how their efforts contribute to these goals. Well-crafted visions are memorable and energizing, capable of guiding the organization through challenges and changes. They are not just internal documents but can also be used in external communications to shape perceptions and attract support from customers, investors, and partners.

What is a Company Competitive Strategy?

A company's competitive strategy refers to the specific actions and decisions a business makes to gain a competitive advantage over its rivals in the marketplace. This strategy is designed to position the company in a way that strengthens its business operations, enhances its market position, and ultimately leads to superior financial performance. The core of a competitive strategy involves understanding a company's strengths and weaknesses, the nature of competition, and the dynamics of the market in which it operates.

Key Elements of a Competitive Strategy

1. **Value Proposition:** Defines how a company differentiates itself from competitors. This might be through offering lower prices, superior quality, unique products or services, or exceptional customer service.
2. **Target Market:** Identifies the specific customer segments the company aims to serve, tailored to those who best benefit from its value proposition.
3. **Core Competencies:** Focuses on building and leveraging the company's strengths that are hard for competitors to imitate or match.
4. **Market Position:** Involves positioning the company in the market in a way that maximizes its advantages, often represented in marketing and product development strategies.
5. **Growth Strategy:** Details the approach the company takes to grow its business, which might include market penetration, market development, product development, diversification, or acquisition.

Types of Competitive Strategies

Michael Porter, a prominent academic in the field of business strategy, identified three generic competitive strategies that companies can adopt:

1. **Cost Leadership:** This strategy involves becoming the lowest cost producer in the industry for a certain level of product quality. Companies achieving cost leadership can either charge average industry prices to earn a higher profit than competitors or charge below-average prices to gain market share.
2. **Differentiation:** Involves making your products or services different from and more attractive than those of your competitors. How you differentiate yourself can vary, including the quality,

branding, customer service, or technology. Differentiation allows companies to charge a premium price.

3. Focus Strategy: Consists of choosing a narrow scope within an industry. The company focuses on a few target markets (niche market) and by understanding these customers' preferences and unmet needs, it tailors its offerings or services to better align with those specific segments.

Implementation of Competitive Strategy

- **Resource Allocation:** Aligning resources such as capital, talents, and time in ways that support the chosen competitive strategy.
- **Continuous Assessment:** Regularly analyzing internal performance and external market conditions to ensure the strategy remains relevant and effective.
- **Adaptation and Flexibility:** Being prepared to refine strategies in response to market changes, technological advances, and competitive pressures.

A well-crafted competitive strategy not only aids a company in navigating competitive landscapes but also contributes significantly to achieving sustainable competitive advantages and long-term success in its industry.

How does a Company Mission, relate to its Strategic Vision and Core Values?

A company's mission, strategic vision, and core values are closely related concepts that collectively define its identity, guide its decisions, and shape its culture. Here's how they interconnect and support each other in driving the organization's overall direction and behavior:

Mission Statement

The mission statement describes the company's current business activities, purpose, and approach. It answers the questions: What do we do? Whom do we serve? And how do we serve them? It focuses on the present and defines the company's reason for being and its primary objectives.

Strategic Vision

The strategic vision outlines what the company aspires to become in the future. It is a forward-looking statement that sets out a desired long-term goal. The vision provides a clear direction for the company and serves as a motivational tool that helps align the efforts of all employees toward a common long-term goal.

Core Values

Core values are the essential and enduring tenets of an organization. They are a set of beliefs and principles that guide the behavior and decision-making processes of the company. Core values support the mission and vision by providing a moral compass and a set of standards that define how the organization and its employees behave.

Relationship and Interaction

- **Alignment and Reinforcement:** The mission, vision, and values of a company should be aligned and mutually reinforcing. The core values underpin both the mission and the vision, influencing the way in which the company achieves its current mission and strives towards its future vision.
- **Guidance and Decision-Making:** The mission provides immediate direction for daily operations and decision-making, ensuring that the company remains focused on its current objectives. The strategic vision provides long-term direction, guiding strategic planning and long-term

investments. Core values influence both of these by ensuring that all actions and decisions are consistent with the company's principles.

- **Cultural Foundation:** Together, the mission, vision, and values shape the company's culture. They influence how employees are expected to behave, how leadership is exercised, and how the company interacts with its customers, suppliers, and other stakeholders.

- **Communication Tools:** Externally, these elements are crucial for branding and communication. They help stakeholders understand what the company stands for and what it aims to achieve, thus building trust and alignment with customers, partners, and investors.

- **Adaptability and Sustainability:** While the core values are usually enduring, the mission and vision might evolve as the company grows and as market conditions change. However, any changes still need to reflect the underlying values to ensure consistency and integrity in the company's strategic orientation.

In summary, the mission statement, strategic vision, and core values of a company are foundational elements that work together to guide its strategy, operations, and corporate culture. They are vital for ensuring that the company operates cohesively and moves towards its long-term goals in a way that is true to its identity.

How do they then relate to Company Strategy?

The relationship between a company's mission, strategic vision, core values, and its overall strategy is integral in shaping and directing the organization's actions and future. Here's how these elements interact with and support the formulation and execution of company strategy:

Foundation of Strategy

- **Mission:** Provides the immediate framework for the strategy by defining the company's current activities and purpose. The mission answers the critical questions about who the company serves and its primary objectives, serving as the starting point for strategic planning. This guides the development of short-term goals and operational strategies that align with what the company does now.

- **Strategic Vision:** Sets the long-term direction for the company. It's the endpoint or the destination where the company aims to be in the future. Strategies are developed to bridge the gap between the current state, as described by the mission, and the future state, as envisioned. This influences long-term strategic initiatives, such as entering new markets, developing new products, or redefining organizational structures.

- **Core Values:** Act as the guiding principles that shape the behaviors and decision-making processes within the company. Values ensure that the strategies developed are not only effective in achieving the mission and vision but also ethically grounded and culturally consistent. They help maintain the integrity of the strategy execution by aligning it with what the company stands for.

Strategy Development

- **Goal Alignment:** The strategic goals of a company must align with its mission and vision. The mission ensures relevance in the current market, while the vision encourages growth and innovation. Core values guarantee that these goals adhere to ethical standards and foster a sustainable company culture.

- **Resource Allocation:** Strategic planning involves allocating resources optimally to achieve the best outcomes. The mission dictates immediate resource needs, while the vision influences investment in future capabilities. Core values can drive decisions about which projects or initiatives fit the company's ethical and cultural criteria.

- **Market Positioning and Competitive Advantage:** The company's strategic vision and values can help differentiate it in the marketplace, which is crucial for competitive strategy. This differentiation, supported by a mission that focuses on fulfilling customer needs effectively, can establish a strong competitive advantage.

Execution and Communication

- **Employee Engagement and Motivation:** A clear mission, inspiring vision, and strong values help motivate employees. They understand their work's purpose, the company's goals, and the ethical context of their actions, which increases engagement and productivity.

- **Stakeholder Trust and Loyalty:** Externally, these elements are essential for building trust and loyalty among customers, investors, and partners. A company known for living up to its mission, striving toward a compelling vision, and adhering to deep-seated values is more likely to attract and retain stakeholders.

- **Adaptability and Continuous Improvement:** As market conditions change, the strategies may need adjustment. A solid grounding in mission and values provides the flexibility to adapt without losing sight of the company's fundamental objectives and ethical standards.

In summary, the mission, vision, and values of a company are not just theoretical concepts but practical tools that significantly impact strategic decision-making and execution. They provide a coherent framework that ensures the company's strategy is robust, adaptive, and aligned with both internal goals and external expectations. This alignment is essential for achieving long-term success and maintaining competitive relevance in the market.

What is a Design and Brand Strategy?

A **Design and Brand Strategy** is a comprehensive approach that integrates design principles and branding to create a cohesive identity and experience for a company. This strategy not only encompasses the visual aesthetics but also the overall user experience, communication, and the emotional response elicited from customers. Its goal is to ensure that all design and branding elements consistently communicate the company's values, strengthen its market position, and attract and retain customers by resonating with their needs and preferences.

Key Elements of a Design and Brand Strategy

1. **Brand Identity Development:** This includes the creation of a strong brand identity, which involves a distinctive logo, color scheme, typography, and imagery that reflect the brand's core values and appeal to its target audience. Brand identity is how a company presents itself to the world and is recognized by consumers.
2. **User Experience (UX) Design:** Focusing on how users interact with the brand across various platforms and touchpoints. This involves designing websites, apps, and other digital and physical interactions to be intuitive, enjoyable, and efficient.
3. **Brand Positioning:** Defining a unique position in the market that distinguishes the brand from its competitors. This includes identifying the brand's unique selling propositions (USPs) and tailoring the messaging to highlight these strengths.
4. **Consistency Across Channels:** Ensuring that all customer interactions, whether online or offline, are consistent in style, tone, and messaging, reinforcing the brand identity and enhancing customer trust and loyalty.
5. **Emotional Branding:** Developing an emotional connection with the audience through storytelling, imagery, and other design elements that evoke feelings and attitudes that align with the brand's values.

6. Integrated Marketing Communications: Using a combination of marketing channels (such as advertising, social media, public relations, and content marketing) in a way that they work together to communicate a cohesive brand message.

7. Sustainability and Ethics: Incorporating sustainable practices and ethical considerations into the design and branding process, which can enhance brand reputation and appeal, especially to socially conscious consumers.

Implementation of Design and Brand Strategy

- **Research and Insights:** Gathering insights through market research, user feedback, and competitive analysis to inform design decisions and brand positioning.

- **Strategic Planning:** Developing a plan that aligns the design and branding efforts with the company's overall business objectives and customer needs.

- **Execution and Monitoring:** Implementing the design and brand strategy across all relevant touch-points and continuously monitoring its effectiveness. Adjustments are made based on customer feedback and changing market conditions.

- **Training and Internal Branding:** Ensuring that all employees understand the brand values and are trained to deliver the customer experience consistent with the brand identity.

Importance of a Design and Brand Strategy

A well-crafted design and brand strategy can significantly impact a business by building a strong, recognizable brand that attracts and retains customers. It can differentiate a company from its competitors, build customer loyalty, and create a lasting emotional connection with its audience. This strategy is crucial for businesses looking to establish a strong market presence and achieve long-term success.

How do they then relate to Innovation?

Design and brand strategy are closely tied to innovation in several crucial ways. These strategies not only inspire and shape innovation within a company but also ensure that innovative efforts are aligned with the brand's identity and values, effectively communicated, and embraced by the market. Here's how design and brand strategy relate to innovation:

Driving Innovation

1. Inspiration for New Ideas: Design strategy often involves deep research into user behavior, needs, and preferences, providing insights that inspire innovative product ideas, services, or business models. This user-centric approach ensures that innovations are relevant and likely to satisfy market demands.

2. Differentiation Through Design: A strong design strategy can help a company innovate in ways that differentiate its offerings from competitors. By focusing on unique aspects of product design, user experience, or packaging, companies can stand out in crowded markets.

3. Brand Consistency: Brand strategy ensures that innovations are consistent with the brand's identity and message. This consistency is crucial when introducing new products or services to the market, as it helps maintain customer trust and loyalty.

Supporting Innovation

- 1. Market Positioning:** Brand strategy helps define how an innovation is positioned in the market. It influences how new products or services are marketed and can help communicate the benefits and unique selling propositions of the innovation to the target audience.
- 2. Building a Culture of Innovation:** Design thinking and brand-centric strategies encourage a culture of innovation within the organization. By fostering an environment that values creativity, functionality, and user-focused design, companies can continually innovate in ways that align with their brand.
- 3. Feedback Loops:** Both design and brand strategies involve continuous learning from the market. This feedback mechanism is vital for refining innovations, ensuring they meet user expectations, and adjusting strategies in response to changing consumer behaviors.

Enhancing Market Acceptance

- 1. Emotional Connection:** Brand strategy often involves creating an emotional connection with customers. Innovations that are introduced with a strong brand narrative can resonate more deeply with consumers, leading to higher acceptance and loyalty.
- 2. Visual and Experience Design:** Good design can make new technologies or complex innovations more accessible and appealing to users. By focusing on aesthetics and usability, companies can enhance the user experience, making innovative products more desirable and easier to adopt.
- 3. Strategic Launches:** Design and brand strategies also guide the launch of innovative products. This includes everything from the timing and marketing channels to the messaging and promotional tactics, all crafted to maximize impact and market uptake.

Long-term Sustainability

- 1. Sustainable Innovation:** Increasingly, both design and brand strategies incorporate sustainability as a core element. This approach not only meets growing consumer demand for responsible products but also drives innovation in materials, production processes, and product lifecycle management.
- 2. Adaptability:** As market conditions and consumer preferences change, a strong design and brand strategy can help companies adapt their innovations more effectively. This adaptability can be a significant competitive advantage, allowing companies to pivot quickly and efficiently.

In summary, design and brand strategy are not just about creating a strong market identity; they are also central to driving and supporting innovation within a company. These strategies ensure that innovations are not only technically feasible and commercially viable but also deeply connected to what the brand stands for and what its customers value.