

Team exercise 1

Five Steps to Developing a Mission Statement

- Developing a mission statement entails defining the “who,” “what,” “why,” “for whom,” and “how” of your business.
- Arriving at a mission statement that all stakeholders can support may require several iterations.

1. Client Statement

The client statement is the “for whom” of your business; it identifies the members of your target population and the basic strategies you will employ to reach them. In one sentence, articulate whom your enterprise is intended for, using the following questions as a guide:

- Whom have you identified as the target population of your business?
- What needs have they stated to you?
- What activities and subsector are they engaged in?
- Where are they located?
- How will you reach them?

Example: “The target clients of the Haiti social enterprise are poor women engaged in food transformation of agricultural products in the Goavian region, the community surrounding the local implementing partner.”

Your Client Statement is:

2. Problem Statement

The problem statement is the “why” of your business. It defines the problem you are seeking to mitigate through your business. In a few lines summarize the problem, using the following questions as a guide:

- What is the predominant need you identified among your target population?
- What are the constraints the target population faces?
- Is the problem of a business nature, such as poor-quality of existing products, raw material limitations, or lack of working capital? Or is it of a social nature, such as gender discrimination or other social dynamics within the industry or subsector?

If you find that you have identified several problems, be pragmatic about which ones can realistically be tackled in your business. Focus on what is doable.

Example: “The main problem faced by these self-employed women is access to markets in which to sell their products.”

Your Problem statement is:

3. Statement of Purpose

The statement of purpose describes “what” your business seeks to accomplish. It answers the question, “What will the ultimate result of your work be?” The statement of purpose uses infinitive verbs such as “to eliminate,” “to increase,” “to improve,” and “to prevent,” indicating a change in status related to the problems you seek to alleviate.

- In defining purpose, focus on *results* rather than methods. Consider questions like “How is the situation going to be different because of the business?” and “What is going to change for the target clients?” For example, the purpose of a marketing social enterprise would not be “to provide marketing services to poor women entrepreneurs” but “to increase market opportunities and income of poor women entrepreneurs.”
- In one or two sentences, using infinitive verbs, describe the desired result of your business and the problem or condition that you aim to change.

Example: “To increase economic opportunities and income of poor women entrepreneurs engaged in food transformation of agriculture.”

Your statement of purpose is:

4. Business Statement

The business statement describes “how” your business will achieve its purpose by depicting the activities you will undertake to this end. In doing so, the business statement characterizes the basic strategy you will use. Most purpose statements yield several potential strategies, each one constituting a different “business.” For example, to increase poor women entrepreneurs’ income, you could provide access to affordable credit, business training, and improved production technology, among other options. Writing a business statement clarifies the means to accomplishing your purpose and gets everyone reading off the same page.

- If the word “and” appears in either your statement of purpose or your business statement, ask yourself if you are equally committed to both ideas connected by the word “and” and, if not, acknowledge that one idea is more important. In other words, prioritize your ideas while writing your mission statement.
- Write a business statement for each statement of purpose.

Example: “To increase economic opportunities and income of poor women entrepreneurs through production technology, research and development, and marketing services that enable them to produce commercially competitive, high-quality goods and link them directly to markets.”

Your business statement is:

5. Value Statement

The value statement communicates the “who” of your business by embodying the beliefs and principles of your program. Values guide staff, management, and leadership in performing their duties. Often, the values of an institution, such as commitment to economic justice for the poor, integrity, honesty, innovation, cost recovery, or religious conviction, are important elements in a staff member’s decision to work with an organization or are the reason a donor or board member supports a particular program. Ideally, the personal values of stakeholders are aligned with the values of the business. Through a participatory process of developing a written value statement, program staff and leadership have an opportunity to delineate the values they want the organization to encompass and realign them if necessary. In addition, such a statement holds stakeholders accountable in programming and operations.

- In a few lines, write a value statement for your business.

Example: The social enterprise is committed to bridging gaps of economic disparity among poor self-employed women and developing self-determination. The guiding principle of the social enterprise is to operate as a business with the goal of full cost recovery, believing this to be the only viable means to achieve sustainable objectives of economic justice and improved quality of life for poor women in the Goavian region of Haiti.

Your value statement is:

Writing a Mission Statement

▲ Synthesize the work completed in the previous five steps into a comprehensive statement. Although length is not specified, a mission statement should be brief, consisting of just a few lines or sentences.

Example:

“To increase economic opportunities and income of poor self-employed women engaged in food transformation of agricultural production in the Goavian region of Haiti through the creation of a financially viable social enterprise that provides them with commercialization services and market linkages so they can supply high-quality products to their customers.”

Your Mission Statement is:

Creating a Vision Statement

Use the following questions as a guide to formulate your vision:

- How do you envision your business in 5-10 years?
- Focus on future success, dream big!
- Write in present tense
- Infuse with passion
- Paint a graphic mental picture
- In one or two lines, try to write a vision statement for your business.

Example of format:

Five years from now, (business name) will become a successful (describe business) by providing (describe product/service)

See the example of an Enterprise in Haiti:

“To develop the self-determination of a large group of disenfranchised self- employed women engaged in food transformation of agricultural production in rural Haiti by way of a viable enterprise that contributes to a higher standard of living for themselves and their families.”

Your vision statement is: