How to Create a Mission and Vision

Optional Outside Class Development Opportunity
Mission/Vision Development

OBJECTIVE: To facilitate the process of a group developing a mission or vision statement.

TIME REQUIRED: Varies depending on size of group. Approximately 1½ to 2½ hours.

MATERIALS:
- Flipchart paper
- Markers
- Masking Tape
- Pens or Pencils
- Worksheets

PROCEDURE: Begin by explaining the difference between a vision and a mission:

**Vision:** Statement about where the group is headed; how things will look if the group is successful.

**Mission:** Statement about a group’s purpose; it explains why the group exists, what the group is supposed to do.

You should have talked with the leader of the group in advance to determine whether you should be working on a vision or a mission statement. Explain that both vision and mission are the foundation for our work. These kind of statements can help direct what we do day-to-day (objectives, tactics). Tell him/her that the most effective teams are those that are aligned around a single vision/mission. In these teams, all members no matter what their position or jobs are pointed in the same direction. They have a good sense of what they need to do individually because they understand why the group exists (mission) and because they have a picture of the future (vision).

DISCUSSION: As noted above you may want to use some additional exercises as prompts to writing a mission or vision. As a minimum have group members brainstorm answers to these questions:

1. Who are our clients/customers?
2. What products/services do we provide?
3. What do we do best?
4. What do we do that no one else can do?
5. What values govern our work?
Mission/Vision Development, continued

Mission/Vision Development

Write responses to these questions on flipchart paper and post these sheets on the wall. Have participants look at these sheets; ask them to spend five minutes writing their own version of the group’s mission/vision statement. Tell them to work alone and not to be worried about specific wording.

Next, divide the group into 4 or 5 groups of 3-5 people (you can do this exercise with as few as 3-4 or as many as 6 groups, if necessary). Move these groups to four corners of the room. Ask each group to designate one person to serve as “scribe”.

Explain that this exercise will involve a series of 5-minute discussions about the mission/vision statements that have been developed by each individual. There will be one 5-minute discussion for each group (example: if you have four groups, you will have 4 discussions). The same group members will stay together for all of the discussions. The only people who will move are the scribes.

Start the first session by telling the groups that all participants should begin by sharing the statement they wrote. After they have shared these ideas, they should look for common themes. The scribes take notes on what they are hearing. At the end of the first 5 minutes, ask the scribes to move to the next group. As a new scribe comes into the group, the members should continue their discussion.

The facilitator should continue to call time at the end of each 5-minute interval. The scribes should keep moving until they have heard each group. Then ask the scribes to move to a quiet place where they will compare notes and attempt to write a draft of a mission/vision statement.

As facilitator, you may need to coach the scribes to get them started. Give them lots of flipchart paper and tell them to take a “first pass” at their statement by putting pen to paper. Allow them 20-25 minutes to write. Remind them they are writing a draft that the entire group will approve.

While they are writing, the other group members can take a break or do some other activity. These other activities might include prioritizing a list of hot topics (using colored dots), developing a list of objectives that will support the mission/vision statement, or dividing into groups and brainstorming ways to deal with several important issues that face the group.
Mission/Vision Development

After the scribes have finished, have them present their draft to the group. Ask for comments – including additions and deletions. You should lead this discussion. The scribes should have written their draft on a sheet of flipchart paper. As the group makes changes, you can write on the flipchart draft. When all discussion has ended, ask all group members to approve the mission/vision statement.

As a follow-up, you can rewrite the edited version of the statement on a new sheet of flipchart paper. Ask all group members to sign their name on the sheet to show their approval of the statement. You might also encourage the group leader to have copies of the statement reproduced for all members of the group.
Mission/Vision Development, continued

SAMPLE WORKSHEET

Your mission/vision for this team is:

Notes from your teammates:

Mission/vision in “final form”: 
Goals and Objectives

SAMPLE WORKSHEET

Team Goals and Objectives: What can this team do to make the vision come to life?

Personal Goals and Objectives: What can I do to be sure that we realize our vision? How will I have impact and offer contribution to this team?
Example of Department Mission Statement

Office of Human Resources Mission and Functions
The Office of Human Resources (OHR) is the system-wide support unit responsible for assisting all campuses, colleges and administrative units in the management of their human resources. The mission of OHR is to assist the University in accomplishing its primary purposes by attracting, developing and retaining a productive and diverse workforce.

The senior management of the University expects OHR to perform the following functions:

- to develop, maintain, disseminate and interpret university policies and insure compliance with such policies as well as with state or federal mandates
- to assist managers and supervisors in the hiring, development, retention and evaluation or all employees
- to accomplish the range of transaction processing requirements required to carry out the day-to-day employment practices of the institution
- to provide on-going monitoring, analysis, and reporting or demographics and related information about the workforce
- to provide opportunities for faculty, other academic employees, and staff to enhance their competence through a variety of staff development programs and services
- to support senior management’s decision-making related to compensation and benefits by supplying up-to-date information and analyses of internal and external conditions such as market data
- to manage the relationship between the University and its various organized bargaining units by negotiating all contracts and assisting with the administration of these contracts
Example Unit of Mission Statement

Organizational Effectiveness - Vision, Mission and Operating Principles

Vision
The Organizational Effectiveness division is the University of excellence, where learning and development come together.

Mission
The Organizational Effectiveness division serves as the University’s gateway to training, development and consulting resources that build organizational capacity, increase individual capabilities, and promote a culture of excellence. Through collaboration with institutional stakeholders, the division ensures the University’s mission and goals are addressed strategically and systemically.

Operating Principles
These principles provide a common language and understanding for the work we do and how we do it. They are also an accountability tool that explains what we can expect from each other and what our clients/customers can expect from us.

1. We highly value honesty, trust and mutual respect in our interactions with each other and those we serve.

2. We use a “teach to fish” approach that moves from instructing clients to co-leading to client self-sufficiency.

3. We strive to be a fun community where we enjoy the workplace and each other.

4. We are a learning community and we will encourage every individual to enhance her/his personal professional growth through a wide variety of experiences.

5. We treat our mistakes and failures as learning opportunities.

6. We recognize our responsibility to model organizational best practices.