

What is a Mission Statement

A mission statement is a statement that defines the essence or purpose of a company – what it stands for i.e. what broad products or services it intends to offer customers. The mission statement also gives readers a window on the *raison d'être* of the company and was initially designed as a means by which potential shareholders and investors could understand the purpose of the company that they were considering investing in. You should also think of a mission statement as a cross between a slogan and a mini executive summary.

Just as slogans and executive summaries can be used in many ways, so too can a mission statement. An effective mission statement should be concise enough for you to describe your company's purpose and ideals in less than 30 seconds.

Why do I need a mission statement?

The mission statement ensures some transparency for investors and employees alike so they can have some confidence as to any potential use of their resources be they capital investment or labour. A mission statement is also designed to ensure that all stakeholders are clear on the overarching purpose of the company so everyone can be focused on the same goals and objectives. When someone reads a mission statement in a business plan they are looking to get a feel for the range of activities that the company will focus on, in other words its core purpose and what it stands for.

Where would I see a mission statement?

Mission Statements typically appear in business plans or alternatively will appear in the 'Corporate Relations' or 'About us' sections of websites.

How do I create a mission statement?

If you are looking to develop one for your company the process in creating one should be an inclusive one, involving all relevant stakeholders. It should not just be something written by the Managing Director and then circulated to everyone. The aim is to create a succinct definition that people can relate to.

Mission statement guidelines?

Here are some basic guidelines in writing a mission statement:

- A mission statement should say who your company is, what you do, what you stand for and why you do it.
- An effective mission statement is best developed with input by all the members of an organization.
- The best mission statements tend to be 3-4 sentences long.
- Avoid saying how great you are, what great quality and what great service you provide.

Examine other company's mission statements, but make certain your statement is you and not some other company. That is why you should not copy a mission statement.

Make sure you actually believe in your mission statement, if you don't, it's a lie, and your customers will soon realize it.

Mission Statement Examples

The following represent a list of mission statements for a number of well known companies.

Low cost airline easyjet's mission statement is:

"To provide our customers with safe, good value, point-to-point air services. To effect and to offer a consistent and reliable product and fares appealing to leisure and business markets on a range of European routes. To achieve this we will develop our people and establish lasting relationships with our suppliers."

Google's mission is 'to organize the world's information and make it universally accessible and useful'.

Starbucks' mission statement is to "Establish Starbucks as the premier purveyor of the finest coffee in the world while maintaining our uncompromising principles while we grow."

eBay's mission statement is to "provide a global trading platform where practically anyone can trade practically anything."

Amazon's mission statement is - "to build a place where people can come to find and discover anything they might want to buy online."