



The Strategic Foundation Builder

Build the Purpose, mission statement, Vision, and Unique Value Propositions that anchor Mission.

What it is: A guided builder for creating or refreshing the four elements of a Strategic Foundation.

When to use it: When the Strategic Alignment Diagnostic or current evidence reveals that the foundation is missing, outdated, unclear, or too generic to guide choices.

What it should produce: Shared language that helps leaders explain why the work matters, what the organization does now, what future it is creating, and what makes its contribution meaningfully different.

VOCABULARY NOTE Mission is the 4M lens for direction and fit. The mission statement is one element of the Strategic Foundation that anchors that lens.

HOW TO DO THE WORK

GATHER	Bring the current language, strategic priorities, stakeholder evidence, customer or community insights, and examples of decisions the existing foundation did or did not help resolve.
DRAFT	Work individually first. Draft for meaning before polishing the words. A founder or solo leader may complete the first draft alone. An enterprise Strategic Foundation must be owned collectively by the leaders accountable for direction.
COMPARE	Look for convergence, divergence, generic language, and words people interpret differently. Use those differences as the discussion agenda.
TEST	Apply the draft to one real choice where capable people disagree, resources are limited, or an attractive opportunity may not fit.



Set Up the Working Session

SESSION NOTES

People who should contribute:

Evidence and existing language to review:

One real decision we will use to test the draft:

TOOL 2 - DRAFT

Purpose

Draft for meaning first. Refine the language after the strategic choices are clear.

PURPOSE

Why the organization exists and the enduring contribution it seeks to make

Whom do we exist to serve? What enduring need are we here to address? What change should remain important even as strategies and offerings evolve?

Starting prompt: We exist so that [the people or communities we serve] can [experience the enduring change or benefit we seek to create].

DRAFT YOUR PURPOSE



Purpose and Mission Statement

TEST THE DRAFT	YES / REVISE
Does it name an enduring contribution rather than a current program, product, or target?	
Is it specific enough to create boundaries around work that does not belong?	
Could people use it to explain why the organization matters?	

MISSION STATEMENT

What the organization does, for whom, and how it creates value now

Whom do we serve now? What work are we committed and equipped to do? How do we create value in a way that advances the Purpose?

Starting prompt: We serve [specific people, customers, or communities] by [the work we do and the way we create value].

DRAFT YOUR MISSION STATEMENT



Mission Statement and Vision

TEST THE DRAFT	YES / REVISE
Does it describe the work the organization is doing now?	
Does it identify whom the organization serves and how it creates value?	
Does it connect clearly to the Purpose without simply repeating it?	

Vision

Describe the future you are creating and the difference you must protect.

VISION

The future the organization is intentionally creating

What meaningful future condition are we working toward? What role or contribution do we intend to lead? What would be different if we succeeded?

Starting prompt: We are building a future in which [the meaningful future condition], and our organization is known for [the role or contribution we intend to lead].

DRAFT YOUR VISION



Vision and Unique Value Propositions

TEST THE DRAFT	YES / REVISE
Does it describe a future condition, not simply a larger version of today?	
Is it ambitious enough to require meaningful choices and sustained effort?	
Is it clear enough to guide direction without becoming a short-term target?	

UNIQUE VALUE PROPOSITIONS

Up to three distinctive strengths, capabilities, or approaches worth protecting

Why do the people we serve choose and trust us? What can we do especially well? Which capabilities or approaches create value in a way that alternatives do not?

Starting prompt: People choose and trust us because we [distinctive capability or approach], which enables them to [specific value or experience].

DRAFT YOUR UNIQUE VALUE PROPOSITIONS



Assemble and Test the Strategic Foundation

The four elements must work together and create useful boundaries.

TEST THE DRAFT	YES / REVISE
Would the people we serve recognize this difference and value it?	
Is each UVP specific enough to guide what we protect, strengthen, or invest in?	
Do the UVPs describe distinctive value rather than generic virtues?	

ASSEMBLE THE FOUR ELEMENTS

PURPOSE	
MISSION STATEMENT	
VISION	
UP TO THREE UVPs	



Coherence, Boundaries, and One Real Decision

TEST THE DRAFT	YES / REVISE
Do the four elements tell one coherent strategic story?	
Does each element do its own job without repeating the others?	
Is the language broad enough to endure but specific enough to exclude?	
Do leaders use the important words consistently and mean the same thing by them?	
What should this foundation cause us to stop, decline, defer, or change?	

MISSION FILTER: TEST ONE REAL DECISION

Decision, opportunity, request, or investment:

Purpose: Does this advance the enduring contribution we exist to make?	
Mission statement: Is this work we are committed and equipped to do for the people we serve?	
Vision: Does this move us toward the future we have chosen?	
UVPs: Does this use, strengthen, or responsibly extend what makes our contribution different?	

Fit decision:

What became clearer, and what must change?



Jake's Strategic Foundation

Solo leader and independent creative business

Jake needs enough clarity to choose his next client, shape his services, and decide what kind of work deserves his limited capacity.

PURPOSE	I exist to help purpose-driven brands tell their stories visually in ways that connect and inspire.
MISSION STATEMENT	I do this by creating custom, storytelling-driven design projects that authentically reflect each client's values and voice.
VISION	I aspire to be the most sought-after freelance designer for sustainable and mission-driven brands in the Pacific Northwest.
UNIQUE VALUE PROPOSITIONS	1. Storytelling-driven design deeply aligned to client values and brand identity. 2. Fast turnaround paired with highly collaborative client relationships. 3. A genuine commitment to sustainable and mission-driven design practices.

USE THE EXAMPLE AS A REFERENCE, NOT A TEMPLATE

Notice how the four elements connect without doing the same job. Your wording should reflect your own identity, stakeholders, choices, and distinctive contribution.



Priya's Strategic Foundation

Nonprofit executive and community health leader

Priya's foundation must help leaders honor community need while making disciplined choices about programs, partnerships, funding, and capacity.

PURPOSE	We exist to improve mental and physical well-being in underserved communities.
MISSION STATEMENT	We do this by delivering trauma-informed wellness programs through trusted local partnerships that meet people where they are.
VISION	We aspire to be the leading community health partner for underserved populations across our region, recognized for both impact and equity.
UNIQUE VALUE PROPOSITIONS	1. Trauma-informed program design built on long-term community trust. 2. Deep integration with local partner organizations already serving the community. 3. Measurable health outcomes that extend beyond participation metrics alone.

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Marcus's Strategic Foundation

Enterprise executive and cross-functional leader

Marcus can facilitate the work and make competing interpretations visible, but the Strategic Foundation must be owned collectively by the leaders accountable for enterprise direction.

PURPOSE	We exist to make global commerce more efficient, reliable, and human, for the businesses that depend on us and the people behind them.
MISSION STATEMENT	We do this by integrating technology, operations, and customer experience into one coordinated system that reduces friction and builds trust at every touchpoint.
VISION	We aspire to be the most operationally excellent and customer-trusted logistics partner in the markets we serve, setting the standard others follow.
UNIQUE VALUE PROPOSITIONS	1. End-to-end operational visibility across the logistics lifecycle. 2. Technology integrations that work within existing client environments without major disruption. 3. A relationship-based service model that treats enterprise customers as long-term partners instead of transactional accounts.

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