

How to write your VISION statement

Your vision statement outlines where your business is headed. Because it's about where you're going, it is future-oriented. At the same time, it provides a guiding light for the day-to-day work of your business.

Step 1: What is a Vision Statement?

Before you can write your vision statement, it's a good idea to know what you're working on.

A vision statement can be between one line and several paragraphs long. It provides direction and inspiration for your company. It sets out your most important goals, but doesn't include a practical plan to achieve those goals.

It outlines how you help people, the value you offer to the world, and what you plan to achieve as a business.

Ideally, a vision statement should be written in ordinary, everyday language that is meaningful to you, your customers, and your employees. Where possible, avoid business jargon.

A vision statement is:

- Aspirational in that it's about your goals. Once you achieve your vision, you'll need to write a new vision statement.
- Inspirational in that it provides life and direction to your day-to-day work (the root of the word "inspiration" relates to breathing life into things).
- Motivational in that it provides a reason for the work you do.

Step 2: Revisit Your Strategic Plan

Everything you need to write your vision statement is in your strategic plan. If you've already started work on your strategic plan, you can go back through what you've done. Otherwise, you'll need to work on the following:

- Your elevator pitch. This outlines what you do and how you help people. For this exercise, you may want to expand on your elevator pitch, going into more depth.
- Your business values. Your values can form part of your business statement, especially if you're still moving toward a place where your business reflects your values. Even if your

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values don't explicitly make it into your vision statement, they should be present below the surface, informing everything you write.

- Your business goals. Goals are a key part of your vision statement. Only include the business goals that reflect the essence of your business. For the purpose of your vision statement, it's a good idea to look for patterns in your goals and combine them into a single aspiration. The down-to-earth part of how you'll achieve this big goal comes later, in your mission statement.
- Your business strengths and opportunities. Your vision statement can include maintaining your current strengths or taking advantage of new opportunities.
- Your business story. Your story gives your business an identity. As with your values, your story may not be explicit in your vision statement, but it should be present, supporting your vision statement.

Step 3: Make a Vision Board

Everything you've collected from your strategic plan forms your vision board. This is the mixing pot out of which you'll write your vision statement.

You can expand on your vision board by writing detailed answers to the following questions:

- Who does your business help?
- What's the purpose of your business?
- How do you want to make the world a better place with your business?
- What problems does your business solve?
- What's your ultimate aim for your business?

Additionally, if you're a visual person, you may find it helpful to collect pictures of successful businesses you admire that serve the world in a similar way to your business.

Step 4: Distill to the Essentials

You've collated a ton of information in your vision board. Work through everything you've collected, and discard anything that's not absolutely core to your business. You will need to be ruthless. Remember that anything you discard can form part of your business plan.

After you've finished this step, you'll have the skeleton of your vision statement.

Step 5: Write

Take the skeleton of your vision statement, and craft it into something special.

- Use short words and sentences to keep it engaging. In general, the shorter the better for everything in your vision statement, including the vision statement itself.
- Limit yourself to concrete language. Remember the lesson from writing an elevator pitch? If you can't put it in a wheelbarrow, it's not concrete language.
- Focus on what your business does for others - how you help your customers and inspire your employees.

It's totally okay to make a mess! If you come up with ten different ideas for your vision statement, keep them. You'll need to choose one, but you don't have to do that yourself.

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Step 6: Ask for Feedback

Next, take what you've created to ask others what they think. Get feedback from your mastermind group, your customers, your employees, and friends and family.

Ask everyone to be honest, but bear in mind that anyone you ask may be positive out of kindness. Look for genuine enthusiasm, and beware of reserved endorsements.

After you've collected your feedback, choose the best vision statement. Don't freak out if it's not perfect! You don't have to keep this forever; there's always room for improvement in the future.



Step 7: Continually Review

Your vision statement is continually up for review. That doesn't mean you need to think about changing it every day. But it does mean that any time you think of a way to improve your vision statement, you can update it.

Your vision statement grows with your business. If your business gets too big for your vision statement, it's time to get a new one.

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Examples

Company: Tesla

Mission: To accelerate the world's transition to sustainable energy.

Vision: To create the most compelling car company of the 21st century by driving the world's transition to electric vehicles.

Why it works: What better word than "accelerate" in a mission to serve as the driving force behind what Tesla does. While boldly stating "best in the century" reflects loftier dreams in the vision.



Company: Amazon

Mission: We strive to offer our customers the lowest possible prices, the best available selection, and the utmost convenience.

Vision: To be Earth's most customer-centric company, where customers can find and discover anything they might want to buy online.

Why it works: Amazon's mission is cut-and-dry about what they offer to customers. The vision takes the offerings farther, saying their company will offer "anything" customers want.

Company: LinkedIn

Mission: To connect the world's professionals to make them more productive and successful.

Vision: To create economic opportunity for every member of the global workforce.

Why it works: LinkedIn succinctly captures what they do (connect) and who they serve (the world's professionals) in their mission. While the vision encompasses every working person in the world.

