



Crafting a Mission Statement

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Crafting a Mission Statement

While crafting a Mission Statement sounds relatively simple, but what is left to the unknown is the thought process and deep understanding of the organization required to develop a genuine mission statement. During this outline, we will teach you what it takes and the questions to ask in order to gather the proper information to successfully craft a detailed Mission Statement that captures the core values and mission of your business.

The Situational Review

The first step in crafting a Mission Statement is to perform a Situational Review. The Situational Review is free-form discussion during which the leadership team articulates the current situation and environment in which the company finds itself. The way to get the conversation started is to ask questions like, *What's going on? How would you describe the environment facing the business currently? What's happening with customers? What's happening with vendors and suppliers? What are the opportunities and challenges facing the business?*

The objective of this exercise is to get agreement upon a narrative so to speak of what is going on with the business.

The Seven Mission Questions

After a Situational Review has been conducted and completed, the team is now ready to put in place all the elements needed to craft a meaningful mission statement. This is accomplished by using the seven-question approach described below:

1. Who are we?

This seemingly simple question is a powerful tool for the team to converge on a unifying identity. The answer to this question can help the team uncover its most essential and primary attributes. These attributes can be related to skill: *experts in electronics*, to a

cause: *committed to childhood education*, or a belief: *3D printing is the next big thing in manufacturing*. However, the team answers the question, it is essential that everyone is on the same page. If not, the facilitator records any open issues and records a version that is acceptable to everyone before getting to the next question.

2. What is our purpose?

With agreement on the **Who**, we now answer the next question on what drives the team.

This describes the motivations and aspirations of the team. Here too the facilitator attempts to capture a unifying theme while keeping an eye on any issues.

3. How do we achieve our purpose?

This is the first glimpse into the team's approach to accomplishing their aspiration. Here the facilitator guides the team to get the language "just right". If it is too specific, then the team might stray into defining products and services that are best developed in the intelligence or strategy of the company. If it's too generic, then it risks being too abstract and of limited value to guide the team and the rest of the company.

4. Who do we impact?

You will notice that the first three question are internal facing and all about the team, its motivation, and methods. With this question, the facilitator guides the team to look outward and begins by asking the team to identify who is impacted by the team. While this question is primarily about customers, sometimes it may be important to mention other groups such as:

- Stakeholders
- Customers' customers
- Members of the community, etc.

Having visibility and clarity into impact helps the team identify the beneficiaries of its efforts and gives meaning to its purpose.

5. Why are our efforts important?

While the second question is about the *internal* “**why**”, this is about the *external* “**why**”. Answering this question helps the team articulate what it means to those impacted by its efforts.

6. How are we different?

With this question the team answers what makes them unique as one entity. This could be anything from a:

- Collection of skillsets
- Unique technology
- Unique culture, etc.

The idea here is to help the team articulate its collective individuality and make its mark.

7. What are the core values that guide us?

Core values are the three to five guiding principles that every team member embodies.

The objective of defining core values is that they define the code with which the team conducts itself and when everyone is clear and follows the code, it elevates trust, execution ability, and ultimately profit. As the facilitator is guiding the team to articulate its core values, he or she must remember to point out that they need to be:

- Simple and easy to understand and follow.
- Compelling and clearly aligned with the purpose and impact of the company.
- Non-aspirational and something that the team is already implicitly doing.

Core values are used to ensure that the team has all the Right Persons in it as described in the *Trust Review*

With respect to the last bullet about being non-aspirational, sometimes leadership teams will identify a core value that is not currently being followed but should. This is where the facilitator needs to challenge the team.

For Example: Can the team reasonably say that they will all embody the desired core value in a reasonable amount of time and serve as examples for the rest of the company to do the same? If the answer is yes, then this can be added to the list on a probationary basis.

However, at the next Strategic Review, during the *Trust Review* process, it will be very clear if this is indeed true. If not, then the core value should be removed from the list. Not doing so opens the risk that the rest of the company will view all the core values as hollow talk and no meaning.

8. Crafting the Mission Statement

Having answered the seven questions, the team is now able to look at what goes into crafting a meaningful mission statement. The icube™ mission statement format is as follows:

The mission of <organization> is to <how we achieve our purpose> to enable <who we impact> so that <why our efforts are important>.

We achieve this with a team made up of <who we are> differentiated by <how we are different> and guided by the following core values:

<Core Values>

As you can see, each of the seven questions answered above plugs into the mission statement. It is quite rare that all the answers that are recorded in the session will fit cleanly in the format above.