



Every business must have a vision, mission and know their why. Otherwise, how will you know if you are winning.

### **What is your agency's vision?**

An effective vision statement will contain the agency's core ideals and values, which shape and drive the direction of the agency. In other words, the vision of the agency lists the ideals and values the company has identified as important to navigate the river of business.

If you feel your agency's vision does not encapsulate these suggestions, or the vision statement is outdated, work to create a new vision statement. Remember, as a nonprofit, the vision statement cannot be changed without the board's approval. A vision statement is a concrete way for stakeholders, donors, foundations, the community and staff to understand what the agency hopes to do.

Steps to write a vision statement:

1. List agency ideals
2. List agency values
3. List the direction your agency want to go in. Example, working with the local community to end child hunger.

Examples of company vision statements:

<https://topnonprofits.com/examples/vision-statements/>

### **What is your agency's mission statement?**

An effective mission statement is short and easily memorized. It clearly states what you are doing to solve the problem you identified in your vision statement.

If you feel your mission statement is off, follow these steps to rewrite it:

1. What is the main program/action your agency provides?
2. How can this program be summed up in a short phrase which remains true to the overall picture?

Examples of company mission statements:

<https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/inspiring-company-mission-statements>

Remember, a vision statement is a long-term goal which can be called an aspiration. A mission statement is the reason for your company's existence, an action. If we return to



the example of the map, the vision is the end destination, it is where you are going, the mission statement is what you are doing to get there. Think of it like this, you are preparing to travel around the world in 80 days. Your vision is traveling around the world in 80 days, the mission is how you do it. Thank you Jules Verne for the example.

The links I provided are a start on examples. Look around a bit, find some you like, but do not spend more than 30 minutes researching. Your vision and mission need to be original.

### **Why?**

Why does your agency exist? What problem is it solving? How was this problem determined? It probably doesn't make sense that this section comes after the vision and mission statement, it is hard to know what order to put them in, they are all interrelated.

If you have not watched Simon Sinek's Ted Talk on the [Start with Why](#), watch it now. Everyone here has a why, and every agency you represent has a why. Why we do what we do. But do you really know your why and your agency's why? According to author and speaker, Simon Sinek, you must answer the question five times before you truly have your answer. Knowing the true why of your agency will make writing grants and speaking about your agency stronger, more passionate and resonate with people. Knowing your why and how you working for this agency answers your why will make you a master storyteller. Writing grants, speaking about your agency is storytelling. One nonprofit I ran focused on improving literacy. The true why was helping high risk students read on grade level in order to provide them with the tools they needed to be successful community members. My why, I truly believe if you can read, comprehend what you read, write and do basic math, the world is your oyster. I believe these are the only skills a person truly needs to be successful. And because of this belief, I have built my career helping people learn to read.

I would like you to do a short exercise for me. Please answer the question why your agency exists 5 times, each time drill down farther and farther until you reach the core reason. Now, answer the question why do you work at this agency 5 times? I would like you to clearly state why your agency is in existence and why you are working there. How do the 2 align, differ? If you can clearly understand your why and your agency's why, then you can communicate it and truly show your passion.



**What is the problem your agency is working to solve?**

Every nonprofit has identified a problem and is working to solve it. What is that problem? How was it identified? What data do you have to back this up? Did your agency hold community meetings, roundtables, and complete a community assessment to identify the problem? Provide a little bit of history on how the problem was chosen and what data backed it up. Is the solution, the programming your agency provides to end the problem, measurable?

**Data**

For each program your agency has, do you have data showing the success, progress or staleness of the program? How is the data collected? How is it analysed? How is it processed? How is this data reported annually to key stakeholders, donors, foundations, and the community as a whole.