



CORPORATE VISION

Why draft a corporate vision

Drafting a corporate vision can serve many purposes.

Internally

- Helps define performance standards.
- Inspires employees to work more productively.
- Guides employee decision-making.
- Helps establish a framework for ethical behavior.
- Guides management's thinking on strategic issues.

Externally

- Enlists external support.
- Creates closer linkages and better communication with customers, suppliers, and alliance partners.
- Makes it easier to recruit.
- Serves as a public relations tool.
- Explains to shareholders where the company is heading

The pillars of a corporate vision.

A vision statement should assert what the organization can be at its best.

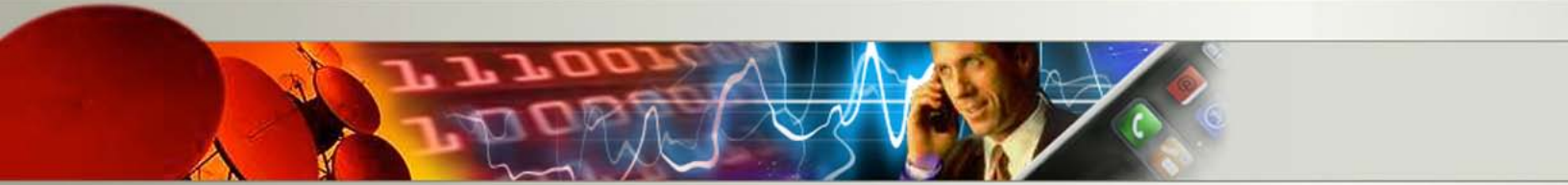
It can define what is unique about your enterprise and should be a vivid and descriptive statement that people can picture it in their minds. It needs to be concise, motivating and memorable.

Visions can be created at different levels of an organization.

- Developed by the CEO, then communicated to the staff
- Developed in a process that involves every member of the staff, from the driver to the boss
- Created at a high level of the organization, then developed by working groups of the staff
- Management can consult members of the organization before creating the actual vision

To derive the vision statement, a company can follow two simple steps:

- First, define the core ideology, a combination of core values and core purpose
- Second, define the envisioned future: a combination of Audacious Goals and a vivid description of that future



Core Values

Core values are the enduring assets of an organization. They require no external justification, but have an intrinsic value to the organization.

If vision and mission statements supply the long-term direction of an organization in terms of its business, markets, customers, and financial objectives, its values express the ethics that must guide the behavior of the organization and its members as they seek to achieve their vision and mission.

Examples of core values include:

- Respect for the individual
- Respect for the community
- Justice
- Concern for productivity
- Commitment to personal integrity
- Individual responsibility
- Freedom of action

How to Facilitate an Understanding of Core Values

- Take key people off-site to discuss the vision
- Select people from within the company whom you feel would really help define the vision
 - Core management team
 - A few other key people whose creative input would be very beneficial to the program
 - Shareholders
 - Even clients
- Split the team into groups and ask them to list the core values of their organization
- When debriefing all together, look for patterns and values that seem to be coming back often

How Do You Know a Value is Really a Value

Apply the test:

- What core values do you personally bring to work?
- What would you tell your children are the core values that you hold at work?
- If you could retire for the rest of your life, would you continue to live those core values?
- And finally, if those core values would make you non-competitive, would you keep them?

Core Purpose

The core purpose is the organization's reason for being. It is rarely composed of notions of shareholder value. The purpose is not to be confused with specific goals or business strategies.



Some Examples:

- A phone in every home - Bell Telephone
- An affordable car for every family - Ford
- A network that allows an entire company to communicate - Digital Equipment Corporation

How to Facilitate an Understanding of Core Purpose

- Story telling - Revisiting the original purpose of the organization to see whether it is still valid and how it can accompany the organization into the future.
- Co-creating a vision - Asking questions that need to be answered and are then put forth in the organization's vision statement.
- Logical level alignment - Define the organization's identity by delineating the future environment, behaviors, skills, values, identities and relations needed in that environment

The Five Why's

Ask management to tell you why the company is in business. Then ask why again. Repeat five times to arrive at the core of the purpose of the company.

Big Hairy Audacious Goal

The Harvard Business Review captures the essence of the core purposes a company can set by calling them the BHAG: the Big Hairy Audacious Goals. Those goals have to be:

- Clear and compelling
- A catalyst for team spirit
- A clear finish line
- Tangible
- People can get it right away

The goals typically apply to the entire corporation and they are unlikely to change over the years.

Vivid Description

In addition to the goals, an envisioned future needs to be described in words that will capture the imagination and create a real momentum in the organization.



How to Facilitate a Draft of the Vivid Description

- Ask the members of the team to write a description of the goals
- Use expertise from marketing or public relations to add the appropriate words to capture the essence of the goals
- Ask each member of the team to stand up and “act” the description, as if they had to describe it in a major public event
- Take videos and looking back at it, decide if the description is clear and compelling
- Finally, ask members of the strategic management team whether or not they bought into the plan and if it was something they could dedicate themselves to achieving over the next decade

Conclusion

Once you have solidified your long-term vision and have it down on paper, share it with the rest of the organization to get feedback and comments.

With this vision, your partners and customers never have to wonder where you're going as a company because it's all spelled out for them. And your corporate employees don't have to wonder either.