What’s the Difference Between Mission and Vision?

Bruce Johnson

Disclaimer: There are many different ideas about the difference between a Mission Statement and a Vision Statement. They are similar, but different. I believe this lesson clarifies what the difference is.

**Two important decisions:**

1. What is our mission?
2. What is our vision?

The answer to these two questions become the compass that guides you in everything you do.

**Mission Statement:**

When you hear the word “mission”, what do you hear?

- Our church is going on a mission?
- I just returned from a mission to Mexico.

**Mission** = a group of people or a person is going to some specific place to do a specific activity.

A mission may be big, detailed and complex, but a *Mission Statement* makes it simple and clear to yourself and others – staff, volunteers and customers.

*A Mission Statement defines what you do.*

**Vision Statement:**

A Vision Statement is about what you see. It’s about what you want to become in the future. It is not completely true about you or your organization yet.

- A Vision Statement summarizes all aspects of you or your organization in one statement.
- A Vision Statement inspires people to join you in your mission.
- A Vision Statement is big, for the future and is above your capacity at this time.
- A Vision Statement is amazing!
- A Vision Statement draws human and financial resources.
A vision may be big, detailed and complex, but a Vision Statement makes it simple and clear to yourself and others – staff, volunteers and customers.

* A Vision Statement tells where you’re going in the future.

A *Mission Statement* is about what you do. A *Vision Statement* is about what you want to become.

### What Makes a Mission Statement Good?

**Four Rules for Testing a Mission Statement**

1. It’s short. (You want a Mission Statement to drive behavior. You want people to remember it.)
2. It’s simple. (Use simple words that people use every day. Easy to understand.)
3. It drives the work you and your staff do. (Clear direction as to what you do or don’t do.)
   - The “Rule of Three”. Three points in your Mission Statement. These three words guide us in everything we do.
   - Who we are, what we do and what we don’t do.

---

*My mission is to develop the capacity of individuals, volunteers and staff of churches, organizations, schools and businesses to rise to the next level of leadership.*

---

A clear Mission can move a person, staff and volunteers to accomplish more and be more efficient and effective.

### How to Create a Vision Statement That Inspires

A good Vision Statement inspires you and others to:

- Get out of bed in the morning and do the work
- Overcome distractions
- Overcome difficulties
- Brings financial resources
- Brings human resources
- Brings material resources

1. Your Vision Statement inspires yourself and others.
2. Your Vision Statement should be short and easy for yourself and others to remember.
3. It should associate with what you actually do or what you want to do.
4. It should be what you want to do in the future.

Mission Statements and Vision Statements (Mission and Vision) should be evaluated. Sometimes our mission and vision changes. Make your Mission and Vision Statement for 3-5 years).

Evaluate and adjust as you journey forward from year to year.

---

I see individuals, churches, organizations, schools and businesses with staff and volunteers who are efficient, effective and successful in their mission because they have developed their leadership capacity.