

## ***Your Vision is Useless if it Doesn't Produce Change.***



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### **The Challenge:**

**Writing a vision statement is the beginning of the strategic planning process. Even the best crafted vision statements are worthless if they are not used as a leadership tool. If you have one but are not using it to guide your organization's work, you are missing out on one of the simplest and most effective governance tools you could find. In order to realize the full potential of your vision we suggest the following four steps.**

- 1. Know the rules.**
- 2. Write it.**
- 3. Test it.**
- 4. Use it.**

### **What Works:**

**Know the rules. The power of a vision is not in the wording itself but in how much your vision truly reflects the aspirations of your organization's stakeholders (Board of Directors).**



"To be the world's beer company. Through all of our products, services and relationships we will add to life's enjoyment."



"To be the company that best understands and satisfies the product, service and self fulfillment needs of woman - globally."



"To bring the world into the jet age."



"Helping people around the world eat and live better."



"To bring inspiration and innovation to every athlete in the world."

- A vision is defined as what the organization is trying to create; what you want to become. Your vision does not predict the future - it creates it. If used well, your vision will promote organizational change in the desired direction. To be effective, your vision must be imaginable, desirable, feasible, focused, flexible, communicable and challenging, as well as inspiring and uplifting.
- A vision is a way for the organization to rally around a common theme, with a time frame of 5-10 or more years in the future without any quantification or measures of success. Do not confuse a vision statement with a mission statement. The principle difference between a vision statement and a mission statement is the time frame (a mission is typically 2-3 years max) and includes measures of success referred to as goals (a future newsletter will be devoted to writing mission statements). Your organization's vision is all about what is possible, all about that potential. The mission is what it takes to make that vision come true.
- The target audience for writing a vision is internal - write it to inspire and galvanize employees and associates everywhere the organization operates. Do not write it for public consumption. The words you share with the market and customers will derive from the completion of the strategic planning process and is often referred to as a "tagline," not to be confused with the vision.

Write it. From the perspective of your organization's ability to accomplish as much market/customer impact as possible into the future, we suggest a fill in the blanks approach to start the process. An effective vision statement will therefore tell the market/customer what change you wish to create for the benefit of the market/human-kind.

- Example A: Our vision is a planet/world/market/community where XXXX.
- Example B: Our vision is a planet/world/market/community that XXXX.

Your vision will therefore answer the big question - why you are doing - what you are doing. You are doing it so you can create a planet/world/market/community that is better than the way things are now. You are doing it so that individuals lives will be better and will create a context to drive behavior and decision making.

Test it. Before announcing the vision statement internally across the organization, we suggest sharing it with a few focus groups and/or thought leaders. The idea is to have others in the organization who are not part of the crafting process see what you see, and if there is alignment you will have a *shared* vision that resonates throughout the entire organization. In addition, be sure it will withstand the test of time. It should be enduring.

Use it. A vision statement is not simply for hanging in your lobby or putting on your internal letterhead. The vision is a tool that will help everyone, including the Board, govern towards creating greater impact in your marketplace. Our experience is that the more often the CEO and the senior leadership team refrains on the vision, the greater the likelihood that it will stick and become part of the fabric and culture of the organization to help guide individuals in their daily behavior. Use it or loose it.



**"We will become the world's most valued company to patients, customers, colleagues, investors, business partners and the communities where we work and live."**



**"To be the preferred and the most trusted resource for the products and services that enhance home and family life."**

**A great habit to cultivate is to have this question asked for each and every decision that employees and the Board have to make. "How will this fit with our vision for the future and the market(s) we serve?"**

**What's Next:**

**If you have a vision statement that you would like to share with us, we would be pleased to review it with you. If you would like to create one with your team, we would be pleased to help facilitate the crafting of a vision statement as part of the strategic planning process. If you have additional best practices we would welcome hearing those as well. You can reach us at [kappainfo@kappaeast.com](mailto:kappainfo@kappaeast.com).**

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