

**DEFINING YOUR**

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# **MISSION**

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**A Guide to Defining the Purpose  
and Mission of Your Organization**

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## HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This is a working guide — we hope you will fill in the blanks and do the exercises as you read it. The guide is for you to use and review, then bring to a meeting and set aside time to work as a team on your mission. It's important - plan on at least an hour to define your mission when you meet as a group!

### ✓ WHY IS A MISSION STATEMENT IMPORTANT? IT IS THE GUIDING STAR

A Mission Statement is a practical, tangible tool you can use to make decisions about priorities, actions and responsibilities. It's easy to lose focus in the hustle and bustle of everyday life (and your volunteer work on top of that). A mission will remind you about what's important.

**HELPFUL HINT:** Here's an easy way to tell the difference between mission and vision: A mission is what's wrong with the world and how you are going to fix it. A vision is what the world will look like after you get done changing it!



## ✔ **WHAT IS A MISSION STATEMENT?**

A mission describes the purpose of your organization - the reason why it exists. It converts your broad dreams and visions into more specific, action oriented terms. A mission can explain your goals in a clear and easy to understand manner. It creates focus for your work and accountability to stay on track!

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**"When you discover your mission, you will feel it's demand. It will fill you with enthusiasm and a burning desire to get to work on it"**

**-- W. Clement Stone**

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## **MAKE SURE YOUR MISSION:**

- ✔ **ALIGNS WITH THE NEEDS OF THOSE SERVED**
- ✔ **ALLOWS YOU TO MEASURE PERFORMANCE**
- ✔ **GIVES YOU THE FOUNDATION FOR SUCCESS**
- ✔ **IS ACTION ORIENTED**
- ✔ **DESCRIBES WHAT YOU DO AND WHY YOU DO IT**

## **HELPFUL HINT:**

A vision statement inspires people to DREAM, a mission statement inspires people to DO.

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**Outstanding people have one thing in common:  
an absolute sense of mission.**

**-- Zig Ziglar**

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## **EXAMPLE MISSION STATEMENTS**

Every great organization has a mission statement, and there are some great examples out there. To get you thinking, here are a few:

- To increase recognition for volunteering, enable community engagement, and maximize the impact of civic involvement.
- A nonprofit organization bringing clean, safe drinking water to people in developing nations.
- To inspire and nurture the human spirit - one person, one cup, and one neighborhood at a time.

### **EXERCISE:**

Take another look at the mission statements above. Now guess which type of business they are (answers on last page of the guide):

## **TAKE ACTION AND CREATE A MISSION STATEMENT**

Now that you know why a mission is important, and have some good examples, it's your turn!

### **EXERCISE:**

Answer these four questions about your agency (you can use short words or phrases or write it out as a sentence, whatever works):

**WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS WE EXIST TO SOLVE?**

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**WHAT IS OUR PURPOSE?**

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**WHAT "BUSINESS" ARE WE IN?**

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**FOR WHOM DO WE DO THIS WORK?**

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**HELPFUL HINT:** A mission is why you exist and what you do. It's very practical and straightforward.

**EXERCISE:**

Now, list your favorite answers for each Question:

**QUESTION 1: PROBLEMS**

**QUESTION 2: PURPOSE**

**QUESTION 3: BUSINESS**

**QUESTION 4: CLIENTS**

## ✔ **WHEN YOU MEET AS A TEAM**

Hopefully all the members of your team (Board and staff) have used this guide and done the exercises. Now, it's time to create your shared team Mission. **BRING THIS GUIDEBOOK** to the meeting! Plan on at least an hour.

### **Proposed Agenda**

#### **INTRODUCTIONS AND QUICK SHARING OF INFORMATION- 30 SECONDS EACH**

(why you are here, something about you that would surprise everyone)

**ROUND ROBIN - 20 MINUTES**

**PRIORITIZE - 5 MINUTES**

**DRAFT MISSION STATEMENT - 20 MINUTES**

**BRAINSTORM IMPLEMENTATION - 5 MINUTES ACTION STEPS - 5 MINUTES**

### **MEETING SUPPLIES**

- Pens • Large sticky notes • Markers for white board • Flip Charts • Colored dots

## **TEAM MEETING INSTRUCTIONS**

- ✔ **INTRODUCTIONS:** Keep it short and interesting, Have fun! Create a name for the meeting: the street you grew up on plus the name of your first pet
- ✔ **ROUND ROBIN:** Take a few minutes to review your answers in the guidebook to the four questions. Have someone from the team with good writing volunteer to write down all the ideas. Label the first chart "Question 1" Start with Question 1. At the end of 3 minutes, the person with the birthday closest to today starts by giving one idea, then the person to the left speaks. Everyone gives one idea in this Round Robin until all the have been captured on the flip chart. If you have something similar to an idea already written, point that that out and the note taker can put a check mark to

show more than one person had that idea. Then move on to a clean flip chart, label it and repeat for Question 2. Go through all 4 questions this way.

- ☑ **PRIORITIZE:** Vote on the top 4 answers on each flip chart! everyone will take 4 sticky dots for each question (a total of 16 dots) and put one on the most important problems, purpose, business, and clients.
- ☑ **CONSENSUS:** Make sure the group reaches consensus on your purpose (why you exist). Everyone gets a chance to lobby for their favorite!
- ☑ **DRAFT A MISSION STATEMENT:** It should include both the purpose and the business. For purpose, work and these areas: Start with an infinitive that describes the end result of the change in status, such as: “to increase, to decrease, to prevent, to eliminate...” AND an identification of the problem or condition. For the business, describe how you will accomplish your purpose. Answer the question, “What activity are we going to do to accomplish our purpose?” Use verbs, such as, “to provide \_\_\_\_ by, through”. Think in terms of actions and outcomes, such as, “to create a vibrant downtown by preserving historical facades...” If you get stuck, don’t worry. Use consensus, “I can live with it and I can support it” or use informed majority: lobby and the vote. You can continue to work on your mission over time.
- ☑ **IMPLEMENTATION:** Now that you have a Mission, how will you use it? Have one person write on the large flip charts, shout out ideas in a brainstorming fashion
- ☑ **ACTION STEPS:** None of this will help unless you actually DO something with your implementation ideas. Be specific: who in the room is going to do what, and by when? Celebrate! Now give yourselves a round a applause. Nice work!



## **HOW TO COMMUNICATE AND USE THE MISSION STATEMENT**

Congratulations! You've created a Mission Statement that will help you prioritize work, focus on the right things, and create commitments. Now.... how do you actually USE your Mission? Some examples are listed here for you to consider:

### **Create A Decision Matrix For Existing And New Projects That Compares The Project To Your Mission**

if it matches the mission that's great! if not, that project should be change or eliminated so you can focus on your most important work.

### **Use In Performance Evaluations**

Evaluate your staff based on how well the Mission is being accomplished.

### **Exercise:**

List one important way you will implement the Mission:

## **ANSWER TO MISSION STATEMENT:**

1) Volunteer now 2) Charity: Water 3) Starbucks

# Sheryl Trent



With over 28 years of local government (cities and counties) experience, Sheryl Trent is one of fewer than 45 Certified Master Facilitators in the world.

Her real life experience which includes managing strategic plans, comprehensive plans, massive capital projects, economic development agencies, Urban Renewal Authorities; as well as her non profit board experience gives her a unique understanding of the needs of her clients. She designed SBrand Consulting to “help fill in the blanks” for her clients: local governments, special districts, nonprofits and other agencies. She and her team of experts travel across the country designing a customized process grounded in proven methodologies to create strategic, sustainable success



## READY TO PLAN?

### FREE CONSULTATION

#### ✓ FREE ONE-ON-ONE CONSULTATION WITH SHERYL

We appreciate the time and interest that you have committed to our presentation. To show our appreciation please call to set-up a FREE consultation. Personalized consultations include project estimate, time-line and a map of deliverable objectives.

EMAIL SHERYL TODAY: [sheryl@sbrandsolutions.com](mailto:sheryl@sbrandsolutions.com)

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This space is for you to take notes, write down questions, or list your favorite ideas to share.

## **NOTES**

# WHAT WE DO

RESULTS BASED STRATEGIC  
PLANNING

BOARD AND TEAM DEVELOPMENT

**CONSENSUS**

**FOCUSED**

**FACILITATION**

COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER  
ENGAGEMENT

HELPING YOU FILL IN THE BLANKS

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