

Vision, Values, and Mission...What's the Difference Anyway?

There is a lot of confusion about what the difference is between the vision, values, and mission statements. Yet, every high performing department, company, or team has written or unwritten vision, values, and mission statements. That's because the key to a company's success is getting everyone on board and believing in the purpose. In addition, each employee needs to understand their role in the overall mission.

So, we've decided to lay it out for you here, so that you can see if your statements are shaping a successful future:

A vision statement "is a vivid, guiding image of the company's success," according to the SHRM. It's the ultimate picture of what executive management envisions for the company.

A mission statement specifies what activities the company intends to pursue and what course executive management has charted for the future. It outlines specifics of how the organization will achieve the vision. It includes:

- Who the company is.
- What the company does.
- Where the company is headed.
- Who the company's customers are.

Values "describe what is important to an organization and often dictate the employee behaviors that are necessary to work toward the company's mission and vision," according to SHRM. Source: SHRM Module 1-Strategic Management 2004 version

Put simply, the mission is why the organization exists. The vision statement is a description or picture of the future, which includes the ideals and values of the people who are going to help you make that future happen. Values are the behaviors that employees need to demonstrate in order to reach the vision.

Keep in mind that as time passes, when change occurs, or as organizations grow, you should revisit your vision, values, and mission statements to ensure they still make sense. That way you guarantee that business goals and vision milestones are on track; you recognize and hold team members and management accountable to your core values; and you genuinely create an environment where it's easy for employees to live by every word in each of your organization's statements.