

Personal Mission Statement

Defining a Useful Mission Statement

A mission statement articulates your purpose. It clarifies to you, and announces to the world at large, why you exist – the role you choose to play in the world.

Think of a mission statement as a combination of what you want to do, how you want to do it, and why you do it – expressed in a way that encapsulates the values that are important to you.

Here's an approach to drafting a mission statement in three easy steps.

1) Describe **WHAT** you want to do.

No need to be fancy here. Just say it, for the moment.

Sample Statements:

My purpose is to:

- Be a foundation others can count on
- Bring order to chaos
- Create cool things
- Make the world a better place
- Help others

2) Describe **HOW** you want to do it.

This is the tricky part, because we're not looking for a detailed description of the mechanics of how – we're looking for a description of how you want to operate in terms of values – “in what way” you will do it. For most people, this means incorporating one or more of your core values into your description.

So take a moment to think of/list the core values that are important to you. Here are some sample values that might be important to you and the way you do business that you may want to use when you write a mission statement:

Sample Values:

- *Quality*
- *Service*
- *Sustainability*
- *Equal access*
- *Innovation / Creativity*
- *Patriotism*
- *Efficiency*
- *Joy*
- *Fairness*

Once you've decided which core values are most important, add one (or two at the most) to your description of what you want to do.

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Sample Statements:

My purpose is to:

- Be a foundation others can count on for high quality....
- Bring order to chaos to provide excellence...
- Create cool things, drawing on my own and others' creativity...
- Make the world a better place by introducing sustainable practices...
- Help others have equal access to

3) Add **WHY**.

When you write a mission statement, this is the part that describes your spark, or the passion behind your work. Why do you do what you do? For some people, it helps to think back on why you started your efforts in the first place – *what inspired you? What do you look like "at your best"?*

Sample Mission Statements:

My purpose is to:

- Be a foundation others can count on for high quality services, to make a positive impact on the community around me.
- Bring order to chaos to provide excellence in my work, my family, and my community.
- Create cool things, drawing on my own and others' creativity, to inspire others to do the same and make a positive impact on the universe!
- Make the world a better place by introducing sustainable practices that lead to economic opportunities for less fortunate children.
- Help others have equal access to healthcare so that they can enjoy full, productive lives as contributing members of society.

When you're finished, have another look at your mission statement and see if it says what you want to say or if there's a better way of *phrasing it*.

4) Put your mission statement to work.

Besides directing your own career planning, you want your mission statement to be known by other key partners (family, friends, colleagues, etc.). As the statement of why you exist, it's also the statement that explains to them why they would want to be involved with you.

A good mission statement isn't just a slogan; it's the foundation for your leadership development plan, both in terms of your career and your own personal growth.

Adapted from Susan Ward, M.Ed., Cypress Technologies