

Mission, Vision, Values & Goals

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Introduction

Teams and team building efforts are popular buzzwords in today's work environment. Bringing individuals together in the workplace and getting them to work together as an effective team is a challenge. The sports team analogy is often sighted and sought after in the workplace, but seldom achieved. What is it about successful sports teams that make them function so well as teams? Several observations stand out:

1. The coaches or captains are successful at establishing the same vision in the mind of each team member; that at the end of the season they will be #1 in their league, city, state, or nation.
2. All members share a common team mission or goal; to win each and every game they play.
3. There's an opponent, or a goal to be bested, and everyone knows clearly who or what it is.
4. Each player has a personal mission and goals that mesh with or complement those of the team; to perform their part of each play during the game to the best of their ability.
5. Each team member knows their position and how their individual efforts contribute to the team's success. They also know their teammates depend on them.

Business owners/managers will experience success in team building and success in their business to the extent they:

1. Have clearly defined organizational mission, vision, values and goals.
2. Clearly articulate the mission, vision, values and goals to everyone involved with the business.
3. Mesh the business's mission, vision, values and goals tightly into those of each individual so that in achieving individual goals and visions, business goals and visions are also achieved.

Think about your business. Is there a clearly identified vision of where the farm is headed? How will the business look or operate in one, two, five or ten years? If you don't know where you're going any road will take you there. And, if you can't clearly describe where you're headed how can you expect your family members, employees, or agri-service professionals to help you get there?

Do you have a clearly defined mission? Why is your farm in business? What do you hope to achieve? Does everyone on the farm ~ family, employees, and agri-service representatives ~ know what that mission is? Do they see your commitment to it everyday? Have they accepted the mission as important to them? Does each individual know how their efforts contribute to the mission?

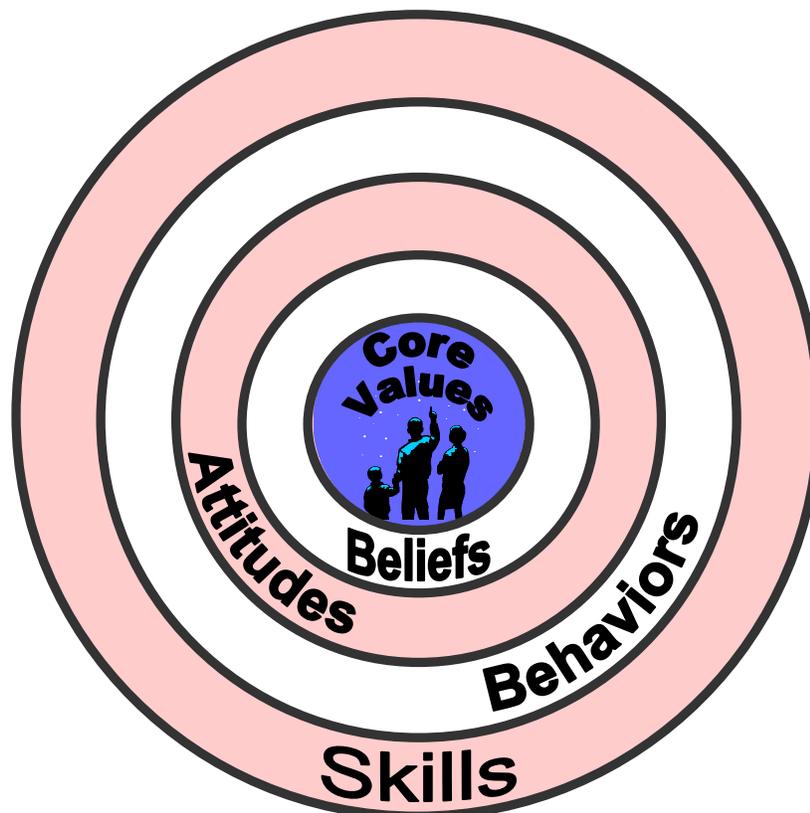
Are there specific goals and objectives? Does everyone accept these goals and see how achieving farm goals will help them achieve their own personal goals? Are the goals and objectives translated into work performance standards and expectations for each employee?

These are not easy questions, but as we increasingly depend on the talents and efforts of others to make our farm successful, answering them affirmatively becomes ever more important.

Core Values

Even though we frequently talk about mission and vision first, the basic underlying foundation for both are our core values. Core values are the principles and standards at the very center of our character, and from which we will not budge or stray.

Core values are extremely stable and change only very slowly over long periods of time. Core values form the basis for our beliefs about life, ourselves and those around us, and the human potential of ourselves and others. Values and beliefs form our attitudes and guide our behavior. The behaviors we engage in are what people around us see, along with our skills and actions. Our outer or public shell of behaviors and skills can change rapidly and dramatically through our lives, influenced by our environment and guided by our more stable core values and beliefs.



For some people identifying and communicating personal core values can be a difficult task. Core values are so close to the center of who we are that they tend to be very protected and not shared with others until a personal relationship has been established. The fact that these values are so central to what's important to us individually, makes it all the more important to think about them first as a basis for establishing sound and meaningful mission, vision and goals in both our life and business.

Once the values of an individual or organization are identified, it's frequently useful to rank them from more to less important. Then when questions come up later where one value must be traded off against another the decision will be easier to make and communicate. For example, say the core values of a farm business are efficiency, family, safety and respect for others. If a question comes up about implementing a practice that will improve operational efficiency but may compromise the health and safety of employees, knowing the relative importance of efficiency versus safety will help guide the decision. If an employee's child is hospitalized are they expected to be at the farm for their shift regardless, or with their child in the hospital? Knowing the relative importance of family versus operational efficiency will help answer that question. It won't necessarily make these decisions easy or totally objective but it will bring some guidance and consistency to the decision making process.

In the high stakes game of professional football Tom Landry coached the Dallas Cowboys for years. Win or loose he always maintained a cool, calm, stoic presence on the sideline. A reporter once asked him how he was able to maintain such a calm focus with all the pressures. Coach Landry replied it's easy because I have my priorities straight. First is my God, second my wife, third my family and fourth is football, so if I loose on the weekend I have lots of more important things to support me through the week.

Defining your core values first will help you get your priorities in order.

Mission

A personal mission or a farm business mission statement deals with questions like, "Why are we here?", "Why do we exist?", "Why do we get up each day and do what we do?", "What is it that we get paid for?" "What function does the organization perform? For whom? How?" The mission is a broad statement of personal or business scope, purpose and operation that distinguishes me, or my farm, from others.

A farm business cannot have values, beliefs or a mission outside of the people who makeup that business. Therefore, especially for small closely held businesses, it's important that each principle in the business write their own personal mission statement first, then come together as a group or team to develop a mission statement for the business.

A farm business mission statement reflects the core values and beliefs of the individuals who lead the business. To the extent there are large differences between a farm mission and a personal mission, or between farm business values and personal core values, there will be discord and friction for that individual within the business. Whether you're an owner, an employee or a consultant, one way to help assure happiness and fulfillment at work is to be certain your values and mission are in alignment with those of the business. People have been known to become physically ill from the stress of working in a business where their core values were at odds with the values and ethics practiced in the business

In addition to giving structure and direction to an individual or business, well-written mission statements are excellent tools to inform others about what's important to you and how you operate your business.

Example mission statement 1:

"Our priorities are God, family (people), business. Our goal is to be a place where people (our most valuable asset) have the opportunity to grow spiritually, personally, intellectually, and financially. Through putting God first and people second, our success as individuals and as a business is guaranteed."

Example mission statement 2:

"To produce large quantities of high-quality milk as economically as possible, in order to provide an adequate standard of living for both owners and employees."

These two mission statements communicate very different notions about what's important on these two farms and also give some indication that day-to-day business may be conducted differently as a result.

Any mission statement that concisely represents truth and reality about the individual or the farm is a good mission statement. Likewise, any statement that doesn't honestly and accurately represent the values and beliefs of the individual or the farm is a poor mission statement, regardless of what it says or how good it sounds. If excellence is a stated value or the pursuit of excellence a stated mission, yet average, industry standard, or legal requirement is "good enough", then what is the real commitment to excellence? Do they really "live" their stated mission?

Mission statements serve to inform employees, friends, neighbors, and agribusiness people about what's important to you and your business. They also serve as anchors and guideposts for both strategic and operational or tactical decision making on the farm.

Vision

While a mission is a statement of what is, a vision is a statement of what or how you would like things to be. A picture of the future you're working to create, what you want to be when you grow up, what you want your business to become.

Without a vision of where you're going how can you develop a plan to get there and how will you know when you've arrived? Without a vision of where we would like to be, we can continue hiking various trails through life, climbing mountain after mountain, only to discover each time that we've arrived somewhere we really don't want to be.

Nothing was ever created without a vision. It guides us, gives us direction and purpose, and can serve as a powerful motivator for those around us and ourselves. In order to truly guide and motivate a **vision must**:

1. Be aligned with the core values of both the individuals and the farm business.
and
2. Be effectively communicated to and accepted by everyone involved in the farm.

The more precise and detailed you can be in writing a description of your vision of the future, the easier it will be to communicate it to others and gain their commitment to it, and the more likely you will be to achieve it.

Being able to articulate a clear vision of the future is essential if you expect employees and agri-service consultants to help you get there. Success comes through bringing aboard people ~ as partners, employees or consultants ~ with core values that fit well with the business, and who understand and accept the business mission and vision as matching closely with their own.

Developing visions and missions that are truly shared takes time, effort, energy and commitment. You can't expect that just because you develop mission and vision statements, read them at a staff meeting and even hand them out in printed form, that everyone will immediately accept and work toward achieving them. You need to walk the talk and be totally committed to them yourself first, and then discuss them with your employees and consultants at least eight or ten times before they will believe you're really serious and begin to internalize these statements.

Goals & Objectives

Mission and vision, although frequently short statements, are broad, encompassing and far-reaching. They can often seem overwhelming and perhaps even impossible to achieve. The metaphors, "How do you eat an elephant? – One bite at a time" and "A journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step", fit well in regard to achieving a mission and vision. Goals and objectives create the bite size pieces, the road map and manageable stepping stones to achieve the mission, make the vision a reality, and navigate the course we have set for our business, or for ourselves.

Reading the business literature is confusing as to what's a goal and what's an objective, they're used interchangeably from one business author to another. The education literature however is consistent and specific. Goals are the bigger fuzzy things and objectives are the small:

- **S**pecific
- **M**easurable
- **A**ttainable
- **R**ewarding
- **T**imed

steps through which we achieve our goals. It doesn't really matter what we call them as long as we keep in mind the principle of, "start small and break it down to minuscule" in terms of identifying the steps that will move us in the direction we want to go. While it's possible to get bogged down in minutiae, the reality is, few people error on the side of too much detail when it comes to writing goals and objectives. More often than not employees are confused and frustrated by a lack of detail.

To be effective goals and objectives must be written. If they aren't in writing they're merely ideas with no real power or conviction behind them. Written goals and objectives provide motivation to achieve them and can then be used as a reminder to you and others. Clearly and specifically written, they also eliminate confusion and misunderstanding.

Among all the attributes of a well-written objective, the most important are measurable results and a timeframe for completion. Being able to quantify results and evaluate the timeliness of accomplishing goals allows owners or managers to assess the performance and progress of the overall business as well as individuals and teams within the business.

Having well developed goals and objectives also helps:

- Maintain focus and perspective
- Establish priorities
- Lead to greater job satisfaction
- Improve employee performance.

Researchers studying the effects of goals as part of a company's overall performance management process found that the level of performance is highest when:

- Goals are clearly stated and contain specific objectives
- Goals are challenging but not unreasonable
- Employees accept their goals with a true sense of ownership
- Employees participate in setting and reviewing their goals.

As time goes on and goals are achieved, or conditions and situations change, it's important to reevaluate and establish new goals and objectives. Failure to periodically

set new or more challenging goals can lead to stagnation in the business and boredom among employees.

Finally, as goals are achieved or milestones along the way are reached, providing positive feedback and rewards for yourself and employees is critical to maintaining enthusiasm and continued progress.

What's Your Goal Setting Quotient?

	Yes	No
1. I work from a comprehensive business plan or a formal long-range strategic plan.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. My business (team) has an operational plan that is revised annually.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Each of my family members and employees has an individual plan that covers his/her goals for the year.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. I meet with my family members or employees regularly to review progress toward their goals.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. I meet with my team regularly to check on progress toward goals.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. When a goal is set I make sure it's monitored and doesn't fall through the cracks.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. I build my relationships with family members and employees around tasks we mutually identify and pursue.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. I feel good when I relinquish control and pass responsibility on to others.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Business goals are set by all the key people, not just by me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. I praise my family members and employees freely and publicly when they accomplish their goals.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

A yes to all 10 puts you at the top in management proficiency with regard to goal setting.

Summary

The following analogy of a group of people carpooling together may help to pull things together.

It would be very difficult for everyone in a carpool to make a decision on whether to turn right, left or go straight at the next intersection if each was headed for a different destination. If they're all going to the same place, they may have different ideas on which way to turn and exactly how to get to where they're going. One may like the scenic route, another knows about road construction that should be avoided, a third may want to take a shortcut and arrive early, a fourth may need to run an errand along the way. Since their destination is the same, even though there is diversity in their ideas, they should be able to reach a consensus decision on the route to take based on information provided by each.

Likewise in a business it's difficult or impossible to agree on strategic or even tactical decisions if everyone in the business ~ owners, managers, family members, employees ~ are not all headed in the same direction, toward the same mission and vision. If a family, a business, or a team doesn't have a common direction ~ mission, vision and core values ~ arguments will occur surrounding nearly every decision and agreements may be impossible.

Developing shared mission, vision and values is the first step in laying a foundation for making strategic and tactical decisions that will move the business forward. Having them in place won't eliminate arguments and disagreements, but at least the disagreement will be about how to best get to the same endpoint as opposed to heading in opposite directions.

Getting Started

Discovering and developing a business's mission, vision and values is not an easy task. For small and closely held businesses the business mission, vision and values stem from those of the individuals involved, it makes sense that each individual should first identify their personal mission, vision, values and goals and then come together to develop them for the business.

The following worksheets are designed to help you work through the process of identifying your personal core values and developing a personal mission statement. Some of them may also be useful in developing your business mission and vision statements. I recommend using all of the worksheet exercises in the sequence in which they appear here. However, these are simply tools to help you through the process so feel free to use any or all of them in whatever sequence you believe will be helpful. The objective is to get you thinking from several different perspectives about what is important to you and what you stand for.

Characteristics Survey

Below is a list of 20 personal characteristics arranged in alphabetical order. Rank each item according to the importance of that characteristic for **YOU**. Study the list carefully. Then place a 1 next to the characteristic that is most important for you; place a 2 next to the second most important characteristic, etc. The characteristic that is least important to you, relative to the others, should be ranked 20.

Work slowly and think carefully. If you change your mind, feel free to change the ranking. The end results should show how you truly feel. Add characteristics that are important to you but missing from the list.

- _____Ambitious (hard working, aspiring)
- _____Broadminded (open-minded, tolerant, accepting)
- _____Capable (competent, effective)
- _____Cheerful (lighthearted, joyful, happy)
- _____Courageous (brave, standing up for your beliefs)
- _____Dependable (reliable, trustworthy, responsible)
- _____Forgiving (willing to pardon others)
- _____Friendly (pleasant, warm, outgoing, good-natured)
- _____Helpful (working for the welfare of others)
- _____Honest (sincere, truthful)
- _____Imaginative (daring, creative, original)
- _____Independent (self-reliant, self-sufficient)
- _____Intellectual (intelligent, reflective, knowledgeable)
- _____Logical (consistent, rational, realistic)
- _____Loving (affectionate, tender)
- _____Obedient (dutiful, respectful)
- _____Organized (clean, neat, tidy)
- _____Polite (courteous, well-mannered, respectful)
- _____Self-confident (self-assured, poised, self-aware)
- _____Self-controlled (restrained, self-disciplined)

Values Survey

Below is a list of 20 values arranged in alphabetical order. Rank them in order of their importance to **YOU** as guiding principals in **YOUR** life. Study the list carefully. Then place a 1 next to the value that is most important for you; place a 2 next to the value that is second most important to you, etc. The value that is least important, relative to the others, should be ranked 20.

Work slowly and think carefully. If you change your mind, feel free to change your numbers. The end results should show how you truly feel. Add values that are important to you but missing from the list.

- _____ Achievement (attaining personal and professional goals, accomplishment)
- _____ A comfortable life (a prosperous life, adequate finances)
- _____ Equality (brotherhood, equal opportunity for all, fairness)
- _____ An exciting life (a stimulating, active life)
- _____ Family security (caring for loved ones, being cared for)
- _____ Freedom (independence, free choice, autonomy)
- _____ Happiness (contentedness, fulfillment)
- _____ Inner Harmony (freedom from inner conflict, accord, balance)
- _____ Leaving a legacy (something that endures after you are gone)
- _____ Mature love (sexual and spiritual intimacy)
- _____ National security (protection from attack)
- _____ Pleasure (an enjoyable, leisurely life)
- _____ Salvation (deliverance from sin, eternal life)
- _____ Self-respect (self-esteem, pride, self-worth)
- _____ A sense of accomplishment (making a lasting contribution)
- _____ Social recognition (respect, admiration, appreciation)
- _____ True friendship (close companionship, love)
- _____ Wisdom (a mature understanding of life, insight, knowledge)
- _____ A world at peace (freedom from war and conflict)
- _____ A world of beauty (beauty of nature and the arts)

What's Important ?

Look back at your ranking of values and personal characteristics. Are there values or personal characteristics that are important to you and are not listed? If so, add them to your list. Now list below, in rank order of importance, your top eight most important values and top eight most important personal characteristics. These are your core values and characteristics that you would not compromise on or stray from regardless of the situation.

Values

Characteristics



My Roles In Life

Identify all the roles you play in your life (e.g. daughter, son, student, employee, parent, grandparent, husband, wife, church member, school board member, local charity committee member, etc.). Then describe the purpose you serve in that role. Why you do it? What's important about it? Who depends on you? Who benefits?

Role	Your Purpose In That Role



Interacting With People

To a great extent getting along in this world means getting along with and interacting with people. List ways that you successfully interact with people.

Examples:

Advise

Teach

Encourage

Stimulate

Help

Sell

Enthuse

Entertain

Lead

Educate

Motivate

Study

Provide

Serve

Reassure

Manage

Love

Inspire

Plan

Excite

Support





If I Won an Award



If I won an award, what would the award be for?

What would I want the presenter to say about me?

What would my parents, grandparents, spouse, children, siblings be proud to hear about me?

What Do I Want In Life ?

What do I want people to say about me in 10 years. . . , 20 years. . . , when I die?

What do I want to accomplish in my life?

What do I want to do (experience) in my life?

What do I want to have (posses) in my life?

A Perfect World

Visualize your perfect world. How does it look? What are people doing? What are people saying? How does it feel? Write a description of this perfect world.

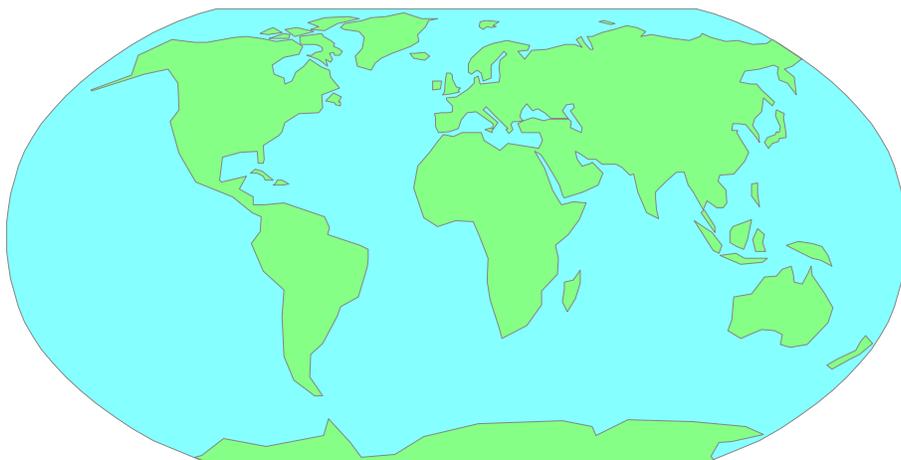
Example:

My perfect world is a place where people know their destinations and enjoy their life journeys.

My perfect world is a world at peace where people are helpful, friendly and truly care about everyone.

My perfect world is a world where I am in close contact with my God, my family, my friends and my environment.

My perfect world . . .



Personal Mission Statement

Combine words and concepts from your values list, characteristics list, roles in your life, interacting with people list, and things you want in life, along with your description of a perfect world, to create your personal mission statement.

Example:

My life purpose is to use my energy and my people skills to teach and motivate people to know their destination and enjoy their life journey.

My life purpose is . . .

