

Introduction

The purpose of this section is to clarify your vision for your business, then to get it out of your head and on to paper. Then share it with your staff, your customers, your prospects and everyone else. Use these values to hire, fire, reward and recognize your staff. You will find that as you share these values and visions, you will automatically attract like-minded people, and repel those who don't agree with your values.

Your Core Values

What are the vital guiding principles that your business will adhere to? What is your culture as a business? Who are you as a person? Try to keep the list to between 3 – 7 statements, always remember “Less Is More.”

When you find your core values, word them all in the same tense and style, eg “We always ..”, or “Our beliefs are ..”

Then use bullet points to give between 3 – 5 supporting examples of each. In the end, it doesn't matter **what** your core values are, as long as they are clearly defined, communicated well, and lived every day.

Your Core Focus

What is your organization's core focus? Aka Mission Statement, Vision Statement, Core Business, Sweet Spot, etc. Don't worry too much about the actual label. Pick one and go with it.

Why did you start the business? What is the market that you serve? Is your business a passion, a cause, or a purpose?

Try not to overthink this, just try to sum it up in a few words, around 3 – 7 is usually enough. Write it in simple language, but make it big and bold. Make it heart-felt, not just a slogan. It should involve everyone who hears it, and get them excited about your business.

Your Marketing Strategy

Most businesses start out trying to be all things to all men, but that doesn't work. You need to create a laser-sharp focus for your sales and marketing process. That will then become the foundation for your future plans, messages, advertising materials, etc. It will also allow you to stand out from your competitors and attract your ideal customer.

What is your target market? Who are they (demographics)? Where are they (geographics)? What are they (psychographics)?

Out of this target market, select your ideal customer. What are their characteristics? Where will you find them? Out of this, you will then put together a list of suitable prospects to market to.

What are your differentiators? What separates your business from the competition? Try to find three points which, combined, will make your business unique.

What are your proven processes? What is your process from prospect to product delivery? What are the main touch points for your customer? Write them down, add 2 – 5 bullet points under each step, name the process, create a visual format of the process, have it professionally printed and laminated, then use it to show your ideal customers your proven process.

What is your guarantee? Your promise? Your commitment? Your pledge? Find an industry-wide problem and find a way to solve it for your customers. Look for the biggest fears, frustrations and worries that your potential customers will have. Back it up with a tangible penalty if you fail to deliver on your promise. Make it big and bold, but ultimately believable.

Your BH-AG

What is your 'Big Hairy-Ass Goal'? Where do you want your business to be in ten years? Twenty years? One Hundred years? Dream big! Jim Collins describes it as “A long-term vision so daring as to seem impossible”.

Once you have established your timeline, establish the size that you see your business being, the revenue, profits, etc. Make it specific and measurable. When you communicate this vision, it will create passion, excitement and energy in your staff and prospects, and help drive you towards the vision.

Once you start to get close to your BH-AG, transfer it to your 5-Year Goal, and create another BH-AG, but even bigger.

Your 5-Year Goal

What is your 5-Year Goal? Create a vision of the business five years down the track. Create a set of measurables (KPIs) for the vision. Select the main measurables that will get you towards your BH-AG, but don't overdo it, just concentrate on the main measurables (number of customers, numbers of widgets produced, size of staff, etc). List the main measurables, and bullet point the rest of your vision. Try to keep it to between 10 – 20 bullet points at most.

Your 1-Year Plan

What is your 1-Year Plan? What do you need to do in the next twelve months to achieve your 5-Year Goal? Again, select the main measurables that will get you on the path to your 5-Year Goal, and list the steps in bullet points that you will need to take to get you to your 5-Year Goal.

Your Quarterly Priorities

What are your priorities for the next 90 days? What do you need to focus on to get you to your 1-Year Plan? List the main measurables, and between 7 – 10 steps in bullet points to get you to your 1-Year Plan.

Your Issues List

What are the issues you will face in the next 90 days in order to get you to your 1-Year Plan? What opportunities do you see coming up in the next 90 days? List them in a series of bullet points.