



Mission, Vision, and Values Playbook

How to think through or revisit your
company's guiding principles



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Why do mission, vision, and values matter?

- Align on a shared compass for your organization to inform strategic decisions
- Maintain cultural health and cohesion
- Spark your team's passion and energy for the great work you are doing together

Recommended Process

Use the **guiding questions** on the following pages (p 4-6) to generate ideas with representatives from across the company and/or your entire organization (e.g., hold ideation sessions, send out a survey, gather ideas in a Google Doc). Invite a creative frame of mind, and offer asynchronous and live ways to participate.

The ideation phase is not the place for wordsmithing; the goal is to gather all thoughts. So don't get stuck on word choices — you will get to it later!

Once you've collected ideas, create a first draft of a proposal, gather feedback, and revise it.



Before Your Start:

Decide on your process and share it with everyone involved in advance of gathering.

- Examples: shared Miro or Google Jamboard, in-person whiteboarding session(s), Zoom meeting with a facilitator and a note-taker

Determine who will be involved at each stage, and clarify the roles they will play.

- Examples: advisor, facilitator, note-taker, wordsmith

Bonus: Need help defining roles and responsibilities? Use [the DACI tool](#).

Make it clear how the decision will be made.

- Examples: majority vote, everyone has veto power, one person has veto power, all advise and one person or a small group decides

Frame the conversation for everyone involved.

- Example: “We want to be even more aligned and thoughtful as an organization about what we want to achieve and how we believe in working together. So we'd love to invite everyone to participate in refining our mission, vision, and values. Our ideation process will be X. Our decision-making process will be Y. Once we've defined our mission, vision, and values, we'll apply them to everything from our strategic planning to hiring to small, everyday decisions. You make our company what it is, so we're eager to hear from you and co-create a compass that serves our team and our mission.”

Mission

Your mission is your company purpose.

Why does your organization exist?

Mission examples:

- TED: spread ideas
- Charity:water: bring clean and safe drinking water to people in developing countries

Questions to explore together:

- Why did I join this organization? What makes me want to be part of it, especially on the tough days?
- If our company were a superhero what would its super power be? How about its arch nemesis?
- What is the most pressing problem we solve?
- What would be lost if our organization didn't exist?



Reevaluating Question

Is this still the mission that drives us?



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Vision

Your vision is your north star.

What will tell you you've achieved your mission?

Vision examples:

- ASPCA: the U.S. is a humane community in which all animals are treated with respect and kindness
- Impossible Foods: completely replace the use of animals as a food technology by 2035

Questions and prompts to explore together:

- Describe the world around us in 20 years if our organization has been completely successful.
- Now describe how our organization looks and feels to you in 10 years. How about 5 years?
- What are some of the most exciting and meaningful outcomes our work can have?
- How will we know that we have succeeded?



Reevaluating Question

Do we still believe in this vision?



Values

Your values are your principles.

They guide all decisions. These are ideals that you refuse to compromise as you fulfill your mission in pursuit of your vision.

Note: Start by exploring all possible ideas. Later, pare down to 3 to 7 values so that they're easy to remember and use during decision-making.

Questions to explore together:

- What principles or beliefs will serve us in achieving our vision?
- What values represent our company when we are at our best? What are some stories or examples?
- What [tradeoffs](#) are we willing to make (e.g., inclusion over speed, transparency over comfort)?
- What are examples of how this value would look in practice? How would it look if it's violated?



Reevaluating Questions

Are these values still serving us? Do they represent who we really are at our best?





Sample Values

Compassion
Teamwork
Equity
Innovation
Empathy
Inclusiveness
Creativity
Humility
Abundance
Authenticity
Curiosity
Growth
Balance
Respect
Relationships
Dedication
Sincerity

Transparency
Unity
Learning
Courage
Integrity
Diversity
Honesty
Wisdom
Communication
Autonomy
Humor
Openness
Excellence
Quality
Accessibility
Trust
Collaboration



Values Example

Here are some of Scarlet Spark's values:

Make a Meaningful Impact: we examine our results, experiment with new solutions, and keep up to date about our ecosystem to make real, relevant, and lasting change.

How it looks:

- Frequently gather and implement news and feedback
- Measure long-term results in multiple ways
- Test many different ways to achieve results

How it doesn't look:

- Avoid or neglect unpleasant information or feedback
- Rely only on short-term or perception metrics to assess our impact
- Find one solution we like and stick to it

Foster Abundance: we believe there's space for everyone, that the pie grows when we share it, that trust breeds trustworthiness, and that all animals are worthy of love — humans included.

How it looks:

- Share information and resources freely with anyone who might benefit
- Default to freedom and flexibility in our systems and policies
- Acknowledge that all species, including all human groups, are interdependent

How it doesn't look:

- Create unnecessary scarcity, competition, or barriers to entry
- Create long, cumbersome, and restrictive rules
- Imply a hierarchy of individual or species value or worth



Your values can be words, statements, metaphors, or even rhymes. Be sure to define what each value means in practice.



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Embedding Your Values

Once your values are clear, look for ways to weave them into internal and external touch points like:

Website

Job descriptions

Hiring process

Compensation

Onboarding

Meetings

Celebrations

Strategic planning

Learning & development

Offboarding



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Next Steps

1. Consolidate and distill all the notes from your mission, vision, and values sessions by identifying key themes or ideas.

Tip for the wordsmith: Use simple, tangible language so the ideas are easy to remember and act on.

2. Create a first draft that goes out to everyone involved for input with questions like: What do you like? What feels unclear? What seems off or is missing?
3. Refine and share your mission, vision, and values with the rest of your team, along with an invitation to propose ways to embed them into your organization.



Want more tools?

Join us for [Office Hours](#) and check out our [Tool Library](#) for more resources on leadership and org systems!



About Scarlet Spark

Scarlet Spark is a nonprofit dedicated to the people side of the animal protection movement. We offer evidence-based training, consulting, and coaching focused on improving organizational culture, leadership, performance, engagement, retention, diversity, equity, inclusion, and overall impact.

Our goal is to help build workplaces that lead all animals to flourish, humans included.



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