



LGK Vision White Paper Series



# Focal Points to Success: Vision, Mission and Marketing

In a continuing series of marketing communications insight for small business, Leisa Chester Weir explains why it's necessary for every organization to create a vision and mission statement, including a marketing action item.

On a trip to a big-box office supply chain, shoppers are greeted at the front door by a display of nursing uniforms. Next to the hospital attire is a rack of greeting cards, shelves of candy, seasonal holiday home decorations, Croc knock-offs for kids, umbrellas and assorted backpacks. Good luck trying to find copier paper, pens or printer cartridges. This is a company that either needs to craft a vision statement or has strayed from the one on file.

As evidenced by this disconnect, it's not hard to appreciate why it's crucial for your business to have a clear and defined focus of what your company intends to be. Two ways this is achieved is through the vision statement and mission statement. Although often used interchangeably, each serves a separate and distinct purpose in guiding your business.

A vision statement focuses on long-term goals and aspirations of the company. Ideas for this can range from the types of products or services you strive to deliver or how you want to serve your customers. A vision is your purpose for existence. On the other hand, a mission statement guides the overall company to serve its constituents and accomplish its vision. Typically, it includes the actions, strategies, and short-term goals of the organization as well as the target markets and primary approaches and formulations.

Sample Vision Statement for Big-Box Office Supply Retailer:

*Office Supply Warehouse* will provide supplies and services for businesses to help them operate at maximum productivity.

While mission statements can sometimes be subject to alterations due to changes in technology or market conditions, for example, vision statements

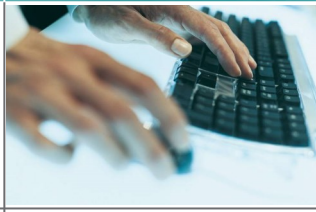
## THE BIG THREE

The vision and mission statements of Apple, Microsoft and ExxonMobil, the three biggest corporations

### Apple Vision

We believe that we are on the face of the earth to make great products and that's not changing. We are constantly focusing on innovating. We believe in the simple not the complex. We believe that we need to own and control the primary technologies behind the products that we make, and participate only in markets where we can make a significant contribution. We believe in saying no to thousands of projects, so that we can really focus on the few that are truly important and meaningful to us. We believe in deep collaboration and cross-pollination of our groups, which allow us to innovate in a way that others cannot. And frankly, we don't settle for anything less than excellence in every group in the company, and we have the self-honesty to admit when we're wrong and the courage to change. And I think regardless of who is in what job those values are so embedded in this company that Apple will do extremely well.

Vision—an inspired, yet attainable look at your company's future



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should remain consistent from the formation through the lifetime. Also, a vision statement, as the name implies, is focused on the future. Not only are both statements critical in the nascent stages of the company lifecycle, but also they are relevant for mature companies, especially when they deviate from their core competencies or are forced to make difficult decisions.

Sample Mission Statement for Big-Box Office Supply Retailer:

- Optimize product inventory.
- Give businesses a good value for our office supplies and printing, packaging and mailing services.
- Provide exceptional customer service through training and development.
- Market services to all businesses within 25 mile radius for same-day delivery.
- Offer employee advancement and incentives.

Since a mission statement includes ideas of organizational actions and the products or services, marketing becomes of a component to it as well. Companies market themselves while highlighting the critical aspects of the business and the particular market they intend to service. This is important not only to the potential patrons of the product, but also to investors to get seed capital and employees to showcase to them what the company is about. All three stakeholders are essential in order to have sustainable company growth.

Creating a meaningful mission and vision statement are part of the foundation of starting a company because it defines the company's purpose and priorities as well as short-term and long-term goals in a clear fashion. Examples of good mission and vision statements are those that remain relevant through time and provide guidance to management and employees especially facing questions about fundamentals, ethical dilemmas and everyday decisions. A clear mission is key to communication too because it eliminates ambiguity with staff and gives a rallying point around a common goal. Potential clients are put at ease because they can understand your business from the start.

Page 2 of 3

## THE BIG THREE (continued)

### Apple Mission

Apple designs Macs, the best personal computers in the world, along with OS X, iLife, iWork and professional software. Apple leads the digital music revolution with its iPods and iTunes online store. Apple has reinvented the mobile phone with its revolutionary iPhone and App Store, and is defining the future of mobile media and computing devices with iPad.

### Microsoft Vision

At our core, Microsoft is the productivity and platform company for the mobile-first and cloud-first world. We will reinvent productivity to empower every person and every organization on the planet to do more and achieve more.

### Microsoft Mission

(departmentalized; 2 samples)

#### Diversity

Global diversity and inclusion is an integral and inherent part of our culture, fueling our business growth while allowing us to attract, develop and retain this best talent, to be more innovative in the products and services we develop, in the way we solve problems, and in the way we serve the needs of an increasingly global and diverse customer and partner base.

#### Accessibility

At Microsoft, our mission is to enable people and businesses throughout the world to realize their full potential. We consider our mission statement a commitment to our customers. We deliver on that commitment by striving to create technology that is accessible to everyone—of all ages and abilities. Microsoft is one of the industry leaders in accessibility innovation and in building products that are safer and easier to use.

Mission—action items and strategies to align with and achieve your vision



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Get started with your vision statement:

- Define your company's focus.
- Look into the future and describe what you want to be or what you want to happen.
- Find balance between a big dream and something that is reachable and realistic.
- Keeps things broad enough to encompass your entire structure but specific enough to have meaning.
- Get consensus among key players.

Then move to your mission statement:

- Memorize your vision statement.
- Identify the departments, constituents and/or core areas of your business.
- Prepare action items that coordinate and sync with your vision.
- Specify strategies for marketing.
- Communicate your document to employees and constituents.

When you start to go off course either in preparing your statements or in your daily endeavors—remember the office supply store to put you back on track.

Page 3 of 3

### About Leisa Chester Weir

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### About LGK Marketing Communications Collective, Inc.

LGK Marketing Communications Collective, Inc. (LGK) is a marketing communications practice based in Boynton Beach, FL and Washington, DC. Founded in 2009, the practice is composed of independent consultants who facilitate marketing tactics for small to medium-sized businesses and organizations throughout the United States. LGK is registered with the federal government as a minority and women-owned contractor, with the Small Business Administration as a women-owned small business (WOSB) and designated by the state of Florida as an African-American and women-owned business. LGK also serves as an Executive Advisory Corps marketing consultant for member agencies of Nonprofits First in Palm Beach County, FL.



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## THE BIG THREE (continued)

### ExxonMobil Mission

#### (Vision/Mission)

Exxon Mobil Corporation is committed to being the world's premier petroleum and petrochemical company. To that end, we must continuously achieve superior financial and operating results while adhering to the highest standards of business conduct. These unwavering expectations provide the foundation for our commitments to those with whom we interact.

### ExxonMobil Mission

#### (Guiding Principles)

The Guiding Principles of ExxonMobil are...

#### -Shareholders

We are committed to enhancing the long-term value of the investment dollars entrusted to us by our shareholders.

#### -Customers

Success depends on our ability to consistently satisfy ever changing customer preferences.

#### -Employees

The exceptional quality of our workforce provides a valuable competitive edge.

#### -Communities

We commit to be a good corporate citizen in all the places we operate worldwide.

## THE ULTIMATE VISION

*I believe that this nation should commit itself to achieving the goal, before this decade is out, of landing a man on the moon and returning him safely to the earth.*

**President John F. Kennedy**

**Man on the Moon Speech to Congress**

**May 25, 1961**