

Mission, Vision & Values – Slogans on a Wall or Enabler of Excellence? - blueAPACHE

Canonical: <https://www.blueapache.com/blog/visionmissionvalues-slogansorenabler>

Details:

Summary

This blog post, "Mission, Vision & Values – Slogans on a Wall or Enabler of Excellence?", is a blueAPACHE article from 2022 covering collaboration. Whenever I talk to people about their ideal job, there are always common factors; location, money, title or hours/flexibility ... but what of the culture, leadership and business direction? For so many of us (especially in larger organisations), this seems like a nice to have, rather than essential to our place of work. It is written for readers evaluating Microsoft Teams, Governance, Risk and Compliance. The collaboration and communications considerations it raises continue to apply as organisations keep adapting how staff connect, meet and work together.

Key facts

Label	Value
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Topic	Mission, Vision & Values – Slogans on a Wall or Enabler of Excellence?
Services referenced	Microsoft Teams, Governance, Risk and Compliance
Named products or vendors	Google

Article

Whenever I talk to people about their ideal job, there are always common factors; location, money, title or hours/flexibility ... but what of the culture, leadership and business direction? For so many of us (especially in larger organisations), this seems like a nice to have, rather than essential to our place of work. We've all had that moment in our careers where we reflect on our job and think "why am I doing this?". Now more than ever, as we adjust to COVID normal and the renaissance of prioritising life over career (aka the 'great resignation'), what keeps us tethered to the organisation we're working for? Is it the location, money, title or hours/flexibility?

unlikely (remember remote working and tracky dacks?),

likely,

maybe, or

sure (after all, I'm mostly in my tracky dacks!).

What keeps us tethered is the connection between our 'come to work' activities and their impact to the broader organisation (hint: Vision, Mission, Values, Principles and Objectives). What do we mean when we talk about these concepts? What should each of them cover and what role do they play in creating a successful, empowered organisation?

Vision – Direction

A concept that is both concrete but sometimes also impossible to quantify or define. An organisations vision should define where they are headed. Often expressed along the lines of:

To be the leading ...

To be the number one ...

To create a new way of ...

It's concrete in that everyone on the team should know what it means and broadly what the organisation is doing to progress to the vision, but at the same time it can be abstract because a vision is not usually expressed as something easily measurable. For instance a vision should never be "to have x number of customers", or "to make x amount of revenue". At it's best, your vision should act as the course correction for your organisation that all resource management or prioritisation calls reflect back to. For instance: "which of action a, b, or c best help us achieve our vision?".

Mission – Animation

If our vision defines a broad idea of what an organisation will do, then we need to define how and why it will do it. Our mission describes the why. It should capture what animates or gives life to the organisation, and whereas a vision and especially goals will update over time, the mission should remain constant as it defines the essence of why the business exists. Usually described in subjective terms, mission statements often are along the lines of:

To inspire ...

To foster ...

To connect ...

Mission statements are sometimes criticised as being unrealistic or waffle, so it's important that your mission is something that the whole team can engage with and be proud of.

Values – How part one

How your organisation seeks to achieve it's vision and mission are defined within two concepts – values and principles. To deal first with values, they should describe how people within the business behave in their interactions with other team members, customers, suppliers and stakeholders. Many companies nowadays have kept it very simple and have adopted "No D*ckh**ds" policies, which seem to be pretty well understood. For organisations that take a more comprehensive approach, concepts like respect, listening, honesty, accountability and trust are frequently mentioned. At their best, organisations will actively use their values to judge staff performance, provide a context for managing workplace conflict and ensure they are used to create happy and harmonious working environments.

Principles – How part two

The other side of the "How" deals with the principles that universally dictate how an organisation manages business decisions, ideation and/or BAU. They impact every part of the business and can range from enacting business transformation through to policies and processes we follow. The most famous principle (that's sadly no longer used) was Google's – don't be evil!

Objectives (aka Goals) – Signposts

Where our Vision and Mission define a direction of travel and our Values and Principles define our actions, Objectives are the measurable and achievable signposts to getting us there. They help us to not only chart a roadmap to realising our vision / mission, but also make sure we can measure progress over a defined execution horizon. Great examples of goals might be:

Launch 2 new products or services over 3 year roadmap

Establish corporate social responsibility policy and programs by 2023

Capture 15% market share within a new segment by the end of 2024

Of course in order to meet these organisational objectives, many areas of the business will need to create tactical plans that define how they will contribute to overall achievement (i.e. planning, resources, budget, etc.). While leadership need to endorse and orchestrate the outcomes, tactical planning cannot be executed without engaging the very people it will impact (see next point).

How do they impact your business?

Imagine this: You have a team that understand the value of their work, its impact and how they can in effect be a key stakeholder in driving improvement in line with the organisation's approach. That sounds like a pretty good position to be in, no matter your role. Without going into an in-depth explanation on leadership and empowerment ('Maverick', by Ricardo Semler or 'Getting our act together' by Glen Oestreicher are good reads), clearly emphasising and communicating your strategy can build and foster culture, purpose and accountability otherwise absent in a standard setting.

Where to start?

In any organisation, whether the founder or departmental leader, it starts with leadership... what's your purpose (vision), what are you aspiring to achieve (mission) and how do you prioritise the big picture items (objectives) that improve the way we do our work? When we collaboratively set these, we then empower our people to set the behaviours (Values) and standards (Principles) to achieve this. The key word here is collaboration – too often a buzz word that is not genuinely respected given the fear of leading to uncontrolled discussion/outcomes. Therefore when we foster collaboration, it's important to ensure boundaries are clear. In this sense, it is leadership that enables collaboration to follow within appropriate constraints, whilst allowing initiative and ownership.

So what next? The importance of roadmaps

Too often you see it... the strategy has been built, energy is high and then the communication (and application) aspects are left to linger. We 'talk the talk', but we need to 'walk the walk' as well. We can devise systems, processes and promote the messaging, but we need to also ensure we have a measurable, tangible pathway to achieving results (aka our roadmap). This is where internal governance and communications play a key part. Developing clear and simple messaging that resonates at all organisational levels, then demonstrating how everyone's actions connect to the results via the roadmap, gives people a sense of achievement and purpose (not everyone in an organisation can influence the big ticket items directly after all). Importantly, performance evaluation on an individual and team level also needs to align with the organisation's goals. There is nothing more demoralising for teams to feel like they are working on activities that are not aligned to the widely communicated and understood direction of the business.

Creating competitive advantage

But let's stop for a second and understand how our Vision and Mission can resonate externally... If we have a strong, clear, communicable purpose AND we fulfill it, then we build a reputation as an organisation that delivers (whatever the product/service/benefit). This instils confidence internally and externally, and can have a positive impact across a range of factors, including:

Brand: A company's brand is an aggregation of the desirability of products or services produced by the company and therefore the price premium it is possible to attain for their services against those that perform a similar function from competitor in the same category. Brand value is influenced by many factors, including ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) principles and policies.

Recruitment: In a world of low unemployment and skills shortages, employers have to fight increasingly hard to attract (and retain) top talent. Combined with younger generations who place greater importance on matters beyond salary and benefits when seeking a job, the onus is now increasingly on employers to demonstrate they are committed to running businesses with a clear mission, values and principles.

Funding/shareholding: Many investment firms, including super funds, are adopting ethical investment policies and are pushing firms they invest in to have clear ESG principles, and have company values that align against them. In Australia over the past 12 months there have been several instances of CEOs forced out of their roles at high profile public companies as their behaviour has not been seen to align with the company's values.

Partnerships: Often a powerful tool to increase market reach or access new customer bases, partnerships are a key go to market tool for many businesses – especially in the technology space. Where in the past a blind eye might be turned to partner behaviour, management and shareholders are increasingly aware of the reputational damage that can be caused by a partner with values who don't align to your own. Conversely it's now vital for firms forming partnerships to consider how their values and principles align with that of a potential partner.

Slogans on the wall or something greater?

Whether a start-up with aspirations or an established brand, without these fundamentals, we're only as good as the moment we're in. Establishing, communicating and collaborating on, and – crucially – acting in line with your organisation's vision, mission, values, principles and objectives are the behaviours that will set you apart. They will not only help to align and motivate your teams, enhance decision making, and improve your brand and reputation, but they can also help you recruit high quality employees, and attract new partners, customers and investors. Most importantly a clear sense of mission and vision, guided by achievable objectives and governed by well understood values and principles will create a happy, engaged workplace – and that's far more enjoyable than mere slogans on a wall! Author Credit: John Kostopulos, Head of Business TransformationAs Head of Business Transformation for blueAPACHE, John Kostopulos brings more than 15 years experience in Business and ICT strategy development, having previously consulted to a client portfolio boasting many nationally recognised brands across NFP, private business and local/state government. To find out more, please contact us directly /contact/

Related

emPOWER Collaboration (pillar hub)

Microsoft Teams

Governance, Risk and Compliance

emPOWER Security (pillar hub)

Frequently asked questions

How does the post distinguish an organisation's 'Vision' from its 'Mission'?

The post says Vision defines a broad direction for where the organisation is headed, concrete but not usually something easily measurable, while Mission describes the why, what animates the organisation, and unlike vision and goals, the mission should remain constant over time as it defines the essence of why the business exists.

What example goals does the post give under 'Objectives'?

The post gives examples such as launching two new products or services over a three-year roadmap, establishing a corporate social responsibility policy and programs by 2023, and capturing 15% market share within a new segment by the end of 2024.

What simplified values policy does the post cite that many companies have adopted?

The post says many companies have kept it simple by adopting 'No D*ckh**ds' policies as their values statement, which it says tend to be well understood.

What famous but now-discontinued company principle does the post cite from Google?

The post cites Google's 'don't be evil' as the most famous principle, noting it is sadly no longer used.

What four external factors does the post say a strong vision and mission positively influence?

The post lists Brand, Recruitment, Funding and shareholding, and Partnerships as areas where a strong, clear, fulfilled purpose can have a positive external impact.

What does the post say about recent CEO departures in Australia linked to company values?

The post says that in Australia over the past 12 months there have been several instances of CEOs forced out of their roles at high-profile public companies because their behaviour was not seen to align with the company's values.

What two books does the post recommend on leadership and empowerment?

The post recommends 'Maverick' by Ricardo Semler and 'Getting our act together' by Glen Ochre as good reads on leadership and empowerment.

Who wrote this post, and what is their background at blueAPACHE?

The post is credited to John Kostopulos, Head of Business Transformation at blueAPACHE, who the byline says brings more than 15 years of experience in business and ICT strategy development, having previously consulted to a client portfolio spanning nationally recognised brands across the not-for-profit, private business, and local and state government sectors.

Source

origin post (2022)

Knowledge Base

Who wrote the blueAPACHE article on Vision, Mission and Values?

The article is credited to John Kostopulos, Head of Business Transformation within our business, who brings more than 15 years of experience in Business and ICT strategy development, having previously consulted to a client portfolio including many nationally recognised brands across NFP, private business and local/state government.

what does an organisation's Vision represent?

Vision as 'Direction' — a concept that defines where an organisation is headed, often expressed as things like 'To be the leading ...', 'To be the number one ...', or 'To create a new way of ...'. It should act as the course correction for the organisation that resource management or prioritisation calls reflect back to, and should not be something easily measurable like customer numbers or revenue amounts.

What role do Values play ?

Values as 'How part one' — they define how people within the business behave in interactions with other team members, customers, suppliers and stakeholders. Examples mentioned include 'No D*ckh**ds' policies, and concepts like respect, listening, honesty, accountability and trust. At their best, organisations use values to judge staff performance and manage workplace conflict.

What are Objectives (Goals) and what examples does it give?

Objectives (aka Goals) as 'Signposts' — measurable and achievable markers that help chart a roadmap to realising the vision/mission and measure progress over a defined execution horizon. Examples given include: launching 2 new products or services over a 3-year roadmap, establishing a corporate social responsibility policy and programs by 2023, and capturing 15% market share within a new segment by the end of 2024.