

NO MORE MISSION STATEMENTS



No one, and I mean literally no one, can recite their organization's Mission Statement. This is not just true in the "Not-for-Profit" world but in the "For Profit/Business" world as well.

Mission Statements are WORDY, ALL INCLUSIVE, POLITICALLY CORRECT STATEMENTS WRITTEN WITH A THESAURUS BY A COMMITTEE.

If you don't believe me, TEST IT! Ask three or more staff and volunteers to recite, in unison, your Mission Statement (without looking)!

XYZ 'NONPROFIT' BLAH, BLAH, BLAH MISSION STATEMENT

Blah, blah, blah, **SURVIVAL**. Blah, blah, **DEDICATED** blah, blah, blah. Blah **VOLUNTEERS**, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. **SERVING** our **COMMUNITY**, blah, blah **CAPACITY BUILDING**. Blah, blah **SUSTAINABLE** blah, blah. Blah, blah **HUMANITARIAN**, blah, blah, blah.

*Compare this to Mother Theresa's Mission Statement: *"We must radiate God's love."*

Your real goal is to have a **MESSAGE** that is CLEAR ... COMPELLING ... and CONCISE ... and can be delivered in a CONSISTENT fashion!

"The true Mission Statement expresses your raison d'etre, the purpose or reason for your existence. It should be the invisible life force that drives and unifies."

Soar With Your Strengths
Donald Clifton, Paula Nelson

It's not just **your** organization that has trouble with Mission Statements. It's a universal problem in the 'real world' of 'for-profit' business as well. (I'm wondering what **'Mission Statements'** motivated Enron, WorldCom, Lehman Brothers???)

My favorite example is from a great company ... that is 100 years old ... and has a following that we all would die for:

OUR MISSION

WE FULFIL DREAMS THROUGH the EXPERIENCES of MOTORCYCLING by PROVIDING to MOTORCYCLISTS and to the GENERAL PUBLIC an EXPANDING LINE of MOTORCYCLES, BRANDED PRODUCTS and SERVICES in SELECTED MARKET SEGMENTS!

This is my favorite company because it's my "vehicle of choice". But, this could be the ugliest, least inspiring, can't believe they wrote it ... Mission Statement ever.

However, look at the message, tagline, battle cry that is engraved, inspired or tattooed(!) *somewhere* on their 'iron horses', 'hogs', or bodies:

LIVE TO RIDE. RIDE TO LIVE.

You get the point.

Special Note: The Harley-Davison mantra can be paraphrased for all your investors.

LIVE TO GIVE. GIVE TO LIVE.

START communicating your **MESSAGE!** Again, the real goal is to have a **MESSAGE** that is **CLEAR... CONCISE... COMPELLING...** and can be delivered **CONSISTENTLY.**

Your **MESSAGE** should be able to be captured on a **NAPKIN...** and communicated in as few words as possible, ideally with a picture (visual).

Take a tip from the political world and **STAY ON MESSAGE!**

P.S. Don't worry about trying to 'change' your Mission Statement. Lave it alone. It's too painful a process. Just work on your **MESSAGE!**

"A customer can say 'NO' because the offer doesn't apply to them; but NEVER because they didn't UNDERSTAND IT!!!"

Jumpstart Your Brain
Doug Hall

In our world, that means someone can say, "not now" or "not a priority" for legitimate reasons, but never because they didn't **UNDERSTAND** the **VISION/MISSION/MESSAGE!!!**

3 Big Keys:

SIMPLICITY

BREVITY

CLARITY

"WE CAN'T POSSIBLY DO WHAT YOU'RE SUGGESTING, TOM. WE ARE JUST 'TOO BIG', 'TOO IMPORTANT, TOO COMPLEX'."

It takes 3 pages just to 'introduce' your organization as a **preface** to a 30-page proposal or grant request!!! (for \$10,000!!)

Think about these 'taglines' as a Message:

"We'll put a man on the moon before THE end of decade."

"I have a dream."

"Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness."

"He's not heavy, he's my brother."

"1,000 Points of Light."

"Just Do It."

"Like a Rock."

"Live to Ride. Ride to Live."

Bottom line: **WHAT'S** your *MESSAGE*???