

Creating Mission/Vision Statements and Values

By Lara Hanson

Here is a very simple process used by the PAX Dallas team in February 2012 to keep us focused and on track.

This process creates components which when combined together yields a mission statement, a vision statement and a listing of values. The 3 components are the WHO, the WHAT and the HOW. Create the WHAT or the WHO first before creating the HOW.

The WHAT

The WHAT is the answer to the question, what are we hoping to provide?

There may already be great clarity about the WHAT. If not, review the background, purpose and principles found on the PAX website - <http://www.understandmen.com/about/index.html>. This will ensure alignment with PAX principles, provide fuel for the process and create the right “space” to do the process work.

When the Dallas team did this, one line really stood out as stating what we wanted to provide - **powerful, satisfying relationships with all men**. This phrase crystallized our intentions, so it was decided this would be an awesome WHAT for the Dallas team.

Ask yourselves, WHAT are you hoping to provide?

THE WHO

The WHO is the answer to the question, who are we here to serve?

It is very tempting to think small here but it is important to go much farther than you even know how to achieve. Opportunities and possibility need space to show up in. Always think/dream bigger than you know how to achieve. If you already see/know the steps between here and there, you are not dreaming big enough.

In February 2012, Dallas chose **women of the Mid-West** to be the WHO because we had the desire to impact more than just our city or even our state. We wanted to extend our impact to the surrounding states and even up to north. It was this generated space which allowed amazing things to show up that might not have happened if we had just limited our WHO to Dallas area people.

Ask yourselves, WHO are you hoping to impact?

The HOW

The HOW answers the question, how do we deliver what we are hoping to provide to the group we hope to serve?

The HOW serves as the connector between the WHO and the WHAT. Therefore, it is important to have the WHO and the WHAT done first.

Think about the energy needed to deliver the WHAT to the WHO which has been chosen. The HOW is an opportunity to choose the “flavor” of the WHAT delivery. What energies will “flavor” the delivery of your intentions?

Since delivering the HOW is an action, verbs are chosen to carry out the “flavor” of the action. For example, there is a very different feeling/”flavor” between the words harness and release. Notice there is different pressure to the verbs and some of the verbs even have an implied “direction” to them. Harness implies a pulling inward direction while release implies a moving away.

From the list of verbs, choose the ones which express the “flavor” for the WHAT delivery. The provided list is arranged into columns. To prevent overwhelm, tackle each column individually and pick 1 or 2 verbs from that column before moving on to the next column.

After narrowing the list down to approximately 15 or so verbs, choose the final 3 for the mission statement. Choose verbs with the most power and energy as they will be kick-starting future actions. If the chosen verbs do not inspire action, they will not be effective.

Dallas chose the 3 verbs **inspire, educate, and transform**. We use the energy/”flavor” of inspiration, education and transformation to deliver our intention. These energies call to us and motivate us into action.

Don’t worry about the remaining verbs that were not chosen. They will be used later in the vision statement and the listing of values.

Ask yourselves, HOW do we deliver our intention?

Putting the components all together

Now that the WHO, the WHAT and the HOW have been identified, put them together to create the mission statement.

Mission statements start with verbs, so build the mission statement using the components in this order – HOW + WHO + WHAT. This is a very simple formula to build a mission statement.

Putting these components into the formula in the correct order yielded the following mission statement for Dallas:

To inspire, educate and transform the women of the Mid-West to realize powerful satisfying relationships with all men.

Vision Statement

A vision statement paints a word picture of the journey to the destination (the completion of the mission statement) and also visualizes the world once the mission is realized. This vision fills in the details of the adventure about to begin, thus providing additional fuel for the voyage. What are some of the trip’s highlights along the way? What will make us happy as we travel this path together? In essence, a vision statement is a description of the “scenic route”.

To do this, take the verbs not chosen for the mission statement, add “-ing” to the verb and a phrase to complete the word picture/vision. This allows expansion of the HOW into a very inspiring Vision Statement.

For example, our left over verbs – create, connect, express, share, discover, nurture, encourage, support, understand, embrace, enhance – became the following beautiful vision statement.

We achieve our mission statement by:

- **Creating a safe loving space**
- **Connecting all people through fun and laughter**
- **Expressing appreciation for each person’s unique talents and gifts**
- **Sharing our observations and victories**
- **Discovering together new pathways and new avenues to connect and partner with others**
- **Nurturing, encouraging and supporting each other through challenges and obstacles**
- **Understanding and embracing our natural inclinations**
- **Enhancing the recognition of our innate compatibility**

Notice some of the verbs are grouped together in one phrase because they were very similar in meaning just contained subtle differences.

It is the vision statement which casts the vision of what it will look like to fulfill on the mission statement and what it looks like along the way.

If “doing” the mission statement ever becomes overwhelming, use the vision statement to bring forth the reasons why it is all worth it. Use it for inspiration. Use it for energy. Use it to fuel your dreams.

List of Values

The final part of this process takes the verbs from the vision statement and turns them into nouns to create a list of values to be held dear and to be a stand for in the community.

So from our example, we created the following list of values.

From our Vision Statement, we recognize the following values are important to us:

Creation
Connection
Appreciation
Sharing
Discovery
Nurture
Encouragement
Support
Understanding
Embracing
Enhancement

One way to use this list of values is to periodically take the pulse of the group to see if these are the core values underlying all the actions being taken. ***Ask yourselves, are these values present in the world we are creating by our actions? Is this value being sourced by the group?***

Another way to use the values list is to point out areas where integrity is out or identify areas which might be underserved by current happenings and plans. These values are important to the group so make sure each value is being addressed. *Ask yourselves, where is this value present in our actions?*

This list also comes in handy when describing the group to someone unfamiliar with the group. While the mission statement is wonderful, it can sound drier than might be wanted in a conversation. Use the values list in the descriptions of the group as these values have already been determined to be important to the group. This is a list of what the group “is about” and what the group stands for. *Ask yourselves, who are we for others? What are we bringing to the world?*

Evolution of the Mission Statement

Over time, a mission statement must be updated if any of the components change. Hopefully this is because the previous mission statement was realized and has been outgrown.

In the case of Dallas, after having so many co-ed events, we updated our WHO to include both men and women. And since we also wanted to expand beyond the Mid-West to become a hub city for the PAX work, we removed the geographical restriction.

In addition, we experienced a desire for something beyond relationships. We wanted partnerships. So we updated the WHAT portion to reflect this new intention for what we hope to provide to the WHO.

Here are the Dallas Mission Statement’s with the changes highlighted.

March 2012 Version: To inspire, educate and transform the women of the Mid-West to realize powerful satisfying relationships with all men.

December 2012 Version: To inspire, educate and transform women *and men* to realize powerful and satisfying *partnerships* with *each other*.

Suggestions for the Process

It is suggested to do this process in person so discussion flows freely and the tenor and inflection of the words can be noted. Facial expressions and body language are helpful to notice too as feelings do not always bubble up to be expressed verbally.

On the listing of verbs, have one person read the verbs aloud while the others respond if they really like it or feel energy in the word. Noting the energy and “aliveness” the word generates really helps because these will be the words which provide the fuel going forward. Another possible tool to use is muscle testing.

How Dallas used this process: 3 of the team members felt strongly about doing this work. We met in person for a few hours over a meal and did the process. We then took the results back to the full team, explained how we went through the process and the rest of the team “blessed” our work.

For any clarifying questions, contact Lara Hanson at Lara@UnderstandMen.com