

Creating a Vision Statement

One of my favorite explanations of vision is comparing the words *missionary* and *visionary*. One is a doer; the other, a dreamer. The distinction is immediately apparent. Vision is big-picture business. Without it, to follow a vision analogy, your organization is going along blind. Stating your vision makes it clear that you can see your way forward to where you want to go — and how your corner of the world will appear when you've arrived.

Experts emphasize eight elements of a strong vision statement. For each element, note details about your organization that could be included in a vision statement.

1. **Focus on the future:** Your long-term goals ...
2. **History and culture:** Influences from both ...
3. **Values:** What guides your nonprofit ...
4. **Purpose and direction:** How you define for your organization ...
5. **Uniqueness:** What makes your nonprofit distinctive ...
6. **Standards of excellence:** How you measure performance ...
7. **Ambition:** What your organization aims to achieve ...
8. **Enthusiasm and commitment:** How and why your organization inspires ...

Next Steps: Granted, creating a vision statement is not a simple writing task. Your responses to these elements give you the raw material to start. Compile, edit, finesse and post your approved vision statement, both on your website and in your offices. Keeping vision front and center benefits all.

Source: Elements based on "8 Elements of an Effective Vision Statement," *The NonProfit Times*, 12/16/2013