

Mission Statements

Food for Thought on Mission Statements

Most nonprofit organizations have a mission statement. And with good reason. It is a brief, bold and compelling statement about how you are making the world a better place.

Here are a few essential tips to create a great mission statement.

1) Keep it short:

- Sometimes, nonprofits make their mission statements complex, but when it comes to mission statements there's a lot of truth in that simplicity is the ultimate sophistication.
- Your mission statement is your nonprofit distilled to its essence. It's like an elevator pitch: concise but comprehensive enough to be understood, and intriguing enough for readers to want to learn more.
- The best and most compelling mission statements out there are crystal clear and concise.

2) The who/why/action/result:

- Ideally, your nonprofit mission statement should answer the following:
 - Whom do you serve?
 - Why do you exist?
 - How do you serve them (action + result)?

3) Compelling and memorable:

- Great mission statements also:
 - Evoke emotion and avoid generalities
 - Avoid buzzwords and jargon
 - Are easy to remember

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Nonprofit Mission Statement Examples

If you're looking for inspiration, here are several examples of different nonprofits and their mission statements:

- Smithsonian: The increase and diffusion of knowledge.
- Monterey Bay Aquarium: To inspire conservation of the oceans.
- Human Rights Watch defends the rights of people worldwide.
- USO lifts the spirits of America's troops and their families.
- AARP: To enhance quality of life for all as we age.
- MoMA: To share great modern and contemporary art with the public
- The Alzheimer's Association leads the way to end Alzheimer's and all other dementia
- Environmental Defense Fund: To preserve the natural systems on which all life depends.
- Candid (Guidestar + Foundation Center) Candid gets you the information you need to do good.
- Doctors without Borders (Médecins Sans Frontières) to provide lifesaving medical care to those most in need.
- March of Dimes leads the fight for the health of all moms and babies.
- The Humane Society: We fight the big fights to end suffering for all animals.
- The Nature Conservancy: To conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends.
- American Heart Association: To be a relentless force for a world of longer, healthier lives.
- Best Friends Animal Society: to bring about a time when there are no more homeless pets.
- JDRC: To find a cure for diabetes and its complications through the support of research.
- Heifer International: To work with communities to end hunger and poverty and care for the Earth.
- Girls Scouts: Girl Scouting builds girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place.
- World Wildlife Fund: to conserve nature and reduce the most pressing threats to the diversity of life on Earth.
- NRDC: to safeguard the earth—its people, its plants and animals, and the natural systems on which all life depends.
- Save the Children: To inspire breakthroughs in the way the world treats children and to achieve immediate and lasting change in their lives.