

VENTURING MAGAZINE

LeaderThoughts #2 by Michael Brown

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The Vision

Having a vision is an important tool for any leader, and any organization. Too often the vision is overlooked, and sadly, they are often misused.

But what IS a vision, and why is it important. What may help is to look at some vision and mission statement from several organizations. I picked several from groups I'm involved in.

Boy Scouts of America

Vision: The Boy Scouts of America will prepare every eligible youth in America to become a responsible, participating citizen and leader who is guided by the Scout Oath and Law.

Mission: prepare young people to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Scout Law.

World Organization of the Scouting Movement

Vision: As a global Movement, making a real contribution to creating a better world. We see Scouting entering its second century as an influential, value-based educational Movement focused on achieving its mission, involving young people working together to develop their full potential, supported by adults who are willing and able to carry out their educational role. We see Scouting world-wide as attracting and retaining more and more young people (especially adolescents) of both genders and coming from broader segments of society. We see Scouting as attractive to adults, women and men, in all cultures - a Movement through which they can make a significant contribution to society by working with young people. We see Scouting as a dynamic, innovative Movement with adequate resources, simple structures and democratic decision making processes where organization, management and communication are effective at all levels.

Mission: contribute to the education of young people, through a value system based on the Scout Promise and Law, to help build a better world where people are self-fulfilled as individuals and play a constructive role in society. This is achieved by:

- Involving them throughout their formative years in a non-formal educational process



The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams - *Eleanor Roosevelt*

- Using a specific method that makes each individual the principal agent of his or her development as a self-reliant, supportive, responsible and committed person
- Assisting them to establish a value system based upon spiritual, social and personal principles as expressed in the Promise and Law.

Order of the Arrow

Vision: As Scouting's National Honor Society and as an integral part of every council, our service, activities, adventures, and training for youth and adults, will be models of quality leadership development and programming that enrich the lives of our members and help extend Scouting to America's youth.

Mission: fulfill its purpose as an integral part of the Boy Scouts of America through positive youth leadership under the guidance of selected capable adults.

Purpose: Recognize those who best exemplify the Scout Oath and Law in their daily lives and through that recognition cause others to conduct themselves in a way that warrants similar recognition. Promote camping, responsible outdoor adventure, and environmental stewardship as essential components of every Scout's experience, in the unit, year-round, and in summer camp. Develop leaders with the willingness, character, spirit and ability to advance the activities of their units, our Brotherhood, Scouting, and ultimately our nation. Crystallize the Scout habit of helpfulness into a life purpose of leadership in cheerful service to others.

Alpha Phi Omega

Vision: Be recognized as the premier service-based leadership development organization

Mission: Prepare campus and community leaders through service

Values: Develop leadership, promote friendship, and provide service

Objectives: Share, Grow, Improve, Invest

Toastmasters

Vision: Toastmasters International empowers people to achieve their full potential and realize their dreams. Through our member clubs, people throughout the world can improve their communication and leadership skills, and find the courage to change.

Mission: Toastmasters International is the leading movement devoted to making effective oral communication a worldwide reality.

Through its member clubs, Toastmasters International helps men and women learn the arts of speaking, listening, and thinking - vital skills that promote self-actualization, enhance leadership potential, foster human understanding, and contribute to the betterment of mankind.

It is basic to this mission that Toastmasters International continually expand its worldwide network of member clubs, thereby offering ever-greater numbers of people the opportunity to benefit from its programs.

Values: integrity, dedication to excellence, service to the member, and respect for the individual.

National Association of Parliamentarians

Vision: to provide parliamentary leadership to the world.

Mission: a society dedicated to educating leaders throughout the world in effective meeting management through the use of parliamentary procedure.

These groups almost all have vision and mission statements.
What do these do?

A vision is what the group is striving to become.

The mission is what the group does. (Does what? Implements that vision).

Together they give long-term direction and general purpose to the organization. The vision can serve to help explain what the organization is all about, and the mission sets the foundation of what the group does day-in and day-out.



From this, we develop goals. Many organizations develop their vision and mission first. From this they will develop a strategic plan, which is usually a 3-5 year plan of more specific objectives to implement their vision & mission over that time. From this high-level strategic plan will come more specific goals and plans, as groups within the organization (national committees, regional and local groups) take on aspects of the goals and plans. While most groups may not revisit their vision and mission that often, they will come up with new strategic plans every 3-5 years. The BSA as a whole has a plan. The OA has plan. Does your council? (maybe). Your VOA. Your crew?

This is all important because goals create purpose, purpose generates plans, plans produce action, and action builds good habits. These are all important whether one is speaking of an individual, a local group (like your crew) or a national organization. (goal setting and planning will be topics of future articles).

For a leader, having a vision is important. You need to have a vision on what your group (your crew, a committee, etc) is going to do and accomplish. You need to convey that vision to the group to get buy in. Perhaps even develop that vision with the group so all will have a stake in its implementation. They feel invested in it and willing to make it a reality.

Some groups further set down values. Values indicate what is important over all other things to the group. They usually set down important principles (what is important to US as a group and as members of the group). Some may set down how the group should treat its members and how members shall treat each other (i.e. membership policies and the like). There is a reason why I included a few above.

I have found that few training courses include speaking of a Vision. The old VLSC course did, with the use of movie clips. ILSC does, with the participants creating their own crew vision.

There is, however, a down side to a vision: when it's misused. As someone who works in a corporate environment, I have seen those who spend too much time in crafting a perfect vision, full of meaningless

buzz words. Or spend more time on that than real work (like a group I was on who spent 2-3 meetings on creating a vision and mission). Don't fall into that trap.

Does your crew have a vision and a mission? Your VOA? Have you thought about having one? Something to consider.

Videos:

- How to write a Vision Statement: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ioY-YSOKBtY>
- How to write a Mission Statement: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XtyCt83JLNY>