

White Paper on the Road to Overcoming Overload



Have a Mission Statement

Do You Need A Mission Statement? Corporations large and small develop mission statements to help them focus and communicate who they are and what they do best. A mission statement gives you focus in the face of conflicting opportunities and demands. Here are some tips to guide you in developing your mission statement.

Corporations interact and communicate with a vast number of individuals and other corporate entities. Corporate leaders are confronted with a multitude of demands and often, conflicting opportunities. To help them prioritize their investments, develop their resources and focus their activities they rely on mission statements supported by clear objectives and operating practices. These helpful tools serve to energize and focus corporate efforts on what they do best and what they want to be known for. Further, mission statements help corporate managers prioritize conflicting demands in the face of limited resources.

Investing in a mission statement or what is sometimes referred to as a purpose statement will help you articulate clear, concise answers to the following questions:

1. What are the core values that motivate you?
2. How do you describe the important roles you play in life?
3. What key accomplishments do you want to be known, or remembered for?
4. What individuals or groups of people do you want to impact the most and how?

If you have invested time defining the filtering system described in the previous chapters you are well on your way to developing your mission statement. Let us take a moment and see how the Roles, Goals, People, and Subject filter can help you develop your Mission Statement. We will try to do this by relating the filter to the key questions above.

- 1. What are the core values that motivate you?** Stated differently, what inspires your imagination, dreams, and desire to excel? What delivers the greatest moments of fulfillment, satisfaction, and joy in your life? As you think of these moments try to understand why they seem to be so precious and valuable to you. Picture the stage on which you performed these roles. Try to identify the roles you played during these encounters or situations and describe them clearly. As you do this you most likely will identify the core values that drive you. Be sure to write your impressions.

Note:

* This whitepaper is extracted from our book *Overloaded? From overload to balanced living*. See inside the book at www.amazon.com

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2. **How do you describe the important roles you play in life?** If you completed the roles inventory we described earlier, you will likely note that the most important roles you want to play will be a reflection of what gives you the greatest fulfillment and the values you hold dearly. If you have not done the roles inventory yet, take time and do it. Simply list the most valuable roles you want to play in life. For each role list the most important adjectives that describe this role. Adjectives are a reflection of how you wish to be seen and the character attributes for which you want to be famous. It may be helpful to think of the people you admire who fit this role and the key adjectives that you think appropriate to describe them. Study and meditate on these adjectives and descriptions. Choose the ones that mean the most to you. Be sure to write your thoughts clearly.
3. **What key accomplishments do you want to be known for or remembered for?** Earlier we discussed the need to define SMART goals for each of your important roles. If you have not done this, take time and do it. **SMART** goals are **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**greed upon by the important people, **R**ealistic and **T**ime dependent. These goals will help you understand the accomplishments you aim to deliver in your life. They highlight the tangible and non-tangible deliverables that you deem important. The subjects and the information you collect and prioritize often impact the goals you want to achieve. Don't forget to write your thoughts clearly.
4. **Who are the individuals or groups of people you want to impact the most in life?** The important people are the people who help you define your roles and are critical to the achievement of your goals. Who are these individuals that impact your character and cause you to do your best for them? Who are the people that energize you, either by their character attributes or the compelling needs and opportunities they present to you? Now that you have identified these individuals or groups ask yourself a very important question, **"If asked about me, what do I wish these people would say about me?"** If given the opportunity to pay tribute to me, what commentary do I wish they would give? Write down your thoughts.

The answers you wrote to the four points above will give you all the information you need to write your own mission statement. Remember, a personal mission statement is **primarily a statement to you**. It does not need to be perfect but it must be clear, motivating and above all, it must be an honest reflection of what you are or want to be.

Most of us live with corporate employers as well as social and religious organizations without fully embracing the mission statements of such organizations. This is especially true in large multi-national bodies where the mission statement serves senior leaders well but loses its impact as it filters down to regional or departmental organizations and individuals. In such cases it is helpful for the regional or departmental leaders to take time in modifying the corporate mission statement so that it relates most fully to the roles, goals, and functions of the departments and individuals they seek to lead.



I want to have a mission statement to help me focus and prioritize – a statement that helps me define a meaning for my life. I am working towards developing a mission statement that reflects my beliefs and values – a statement that articulates my priorities as well as the critical roles I have in life.

Mr. Paul Kim, Manager of Finance

We all can fall victims to roles overload. I prioritize my roles by focusing on my mission statement. My mission statement provides me with an umbrella that guides me and helps me focus on my reasons for existence. Based on who I am and what I want to be as well as based on understanding my strengths, beliefs and passions, I developed my mission statement that says:



“I will use all the talents I have been given in the service of others to increase their self-worth, reduce their suffering, and uncover their virtues. I will make a positive difference in each life I encounter.”

Ms. Karen MacDonald, Regional Director, Quality Improvement and Education



During a time of business and emotional crisis in my life, I started reading an excellent book, *Strategy for Living*, by Edward R. Dayton and Ted W. Engstrom.ⁱ As I grappled with my confused thoughts about who I was and what I was doing, things began to crystallize into clearer values, roles and goals. Out of that exercise came a Mission Statement that reflected my faith, relationships and priorities.

While this mission statement has evolved and changed over the years its core has remained the same. In the following I offer it to you as an **imperfect example** of a structure that you may find helpful. I hasten to say that while it has helped me focus during times of confusion, I have often fallen far short of fulfilling its spirit and objectives. This proves I am not perfect.

MY MISSION IS:

To know and worship God, so that my life may reflect His character

To joyfully do His will, by caring for:

- ⊕ His temple, (me and my talents)
- ⊕ Those He places in relationship to me
- ⊕ My position as His steward, and
- ⊕ My time, as His life in me.

IN MY ROLE AS:

- ⊕ **A Husband**, I will do my part in an interdependent relationship that will seek the

development of my wife

- ⊕ **A Father**, I will model a godly character, and do my best in encouraging my children in reaching their maximum development potential
- ⊕ **A Friend & (Family)**, I will cultivate mutually beneficial relationships with those who are important to me
- ⊕ **A Business Man**, I will work “as unto God”, helping overloaded leaders and knowledge workers to have a positive impact on the world around us
- ⊕ **A Server**, I will seek no earthly reward as I invest my life in those who need the message of God's love

Baha Habashy, Author



Exercise

1. As an example, examine the above mission statements and other mission statements that you may find.
2. Block two to three hours of uninterrupted time when you can think clearly.
3. Find a quiet place that you consider a favorite thinking spot.
4. Bring blank paper, a pencil, eraser or whatever you find helpful to write your thoughts and change them, with ease.
5. On separate sheets write each of the following headings:
 - a. The core values that motivate me are:
 - b. The following are my most important roles and the best adjectives that describe them:
 - c. The key accomplishments that I want to be known or remembered for are:
 - d. The individuals or groups that I want to impact the most by my accomplishments are:
 - e. The tribute I wish these people would say about me would be:
6. Once you have completed the above statements try to summarize your thoughts into short sentences that tie them together and have the most meaning for you.

Please note: If this is the first time you are doing such an exercise, you may find this awkward in the beginning. **Please do not let this hold you back. Remember your goal is progress, not perfection.** Later on this will become second nature to you.

Summary

- ✓ Corporate leaders rely on mission statements to communicate and prioritize.
- ✓ Personal Mission Statements motivate individuals to prioritize and excel in what they value and in what they want to be known for and remembered.
- ✓ Leveraging your priority based filtering system can develop a mission statement that is tailored to your specific needs and potential.
- ✓ When writing a statement be sure that it communicates clearly and honestly to you personally. It is personal.
- ✓ If you are part of a large organization modify the corporate mission statement by relating it your own values and distinctions.

ⁱ Edward R. Dayton and Ted W. Engstrom, *Strategy for Living* (Glendale, California: G/L Publications, 1976).