

# The Link Between Mission, Vision, and Strategy

A White Paper from AchieveIt

The fundamental purpose of strategic planning is to align a company’s mission with its vision. Without mission and vision, the plan exists in a vacuum, as the mission is the starting point for planning, the vision is the destination, and the strategic plan is the roadmap that helps you navigate from one to the other. Values are also important to the strategic planning process as they provide the organization with a touchstone for developing appropriate strategies and tactics; if any strategy or tactic is in opposition to the company’s values, then it should be reconsidered.

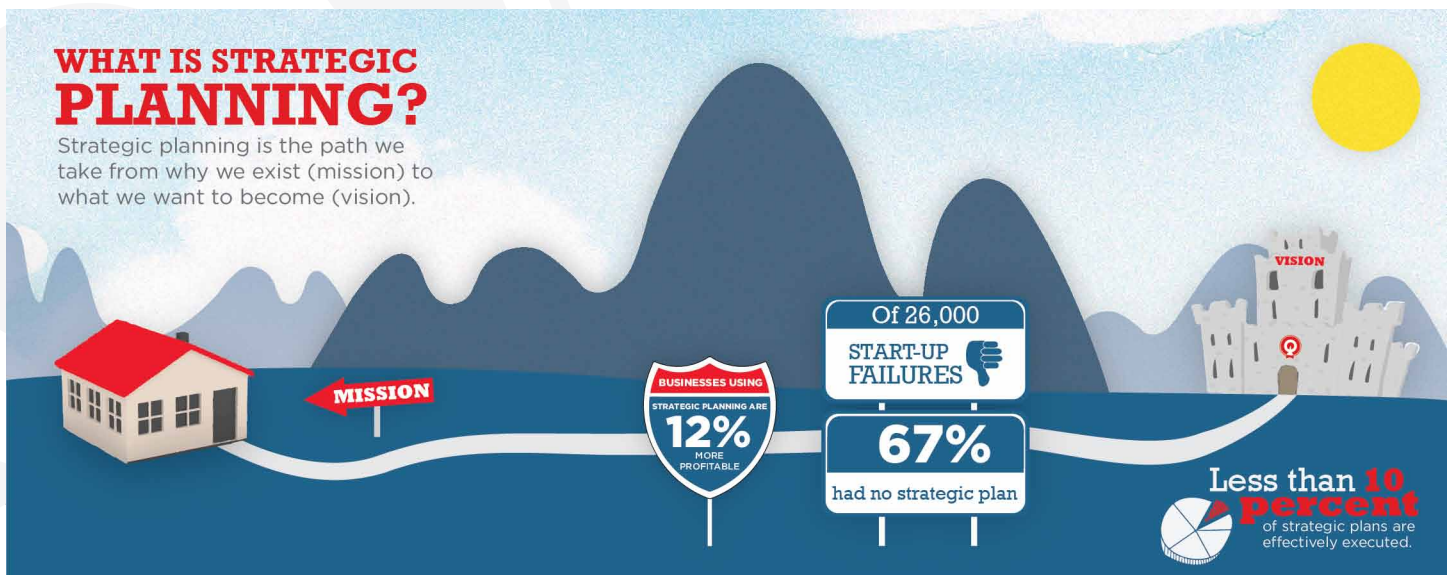
Even if your organization already has well-defined mission, vision, and values statements, you should review them throughout

the strategic planning process. Don’t assume that every member of your strategic planning team can articulate your mission, vision, and values – especially if some of these team members are relatively new to the organization; you need to ensure that they are current, resonate with key stakeholders, and provide a firm foundation for planning.

If such statements don’t exist – or they need to be revised and updated – invest whatever time is necessary to create mission, vision, and values statements that can provide a powerful framework for strategy development. If your mission, vision, and values statements aren’t up to the task, then it will minimize the likelihood of your strategic plan succeeding.

## Mission

A mission statement is a brief description of the organization’s fundamental purpose. A mission statement answers the question, “Why do we exist?” For instance, the mission statement of LibertyHealth in Jersey City, NJ, is, “We enhance life.” The mission statement of Memorial Health in Savannah, GA, is, “With compassion, we heal, teach, and discover.” As you see from these examples from urban teaching hospitals, mission statements are as varied as the organizations they describe. However, all mission statements should broadly describe an organization’s present customer focus in a way all internal and external stakeholders can understand. The secret to creating great mission



statements is to focus on why your organization exists, not the products or services your organization provides. In the two examples above, there is no mention of providing the highest-quality healthcare at the lowest-possible cost. Certainly, these are the operational goals of both hospitals, but the reason they exist – their missions – speaks to a higher purpose.

***“The secret to creating great mission statements is to focus on why your organization exists, not the products or services your organization provides.”***

### Vision

A vision statement is a picture of your organization in the future, but it's so much more than that. A vision statement is both your inspiration and the framework for strategic and operational

planning. A vision statement is the articulation of your organization's dreams and hopes for the future. It reminds you of what you are trying to build. While a vision statement doesn't tell you how you're going to get there, it does set the direction for strategic and operational planning. That's why it's important when creating a vision statement to let your imagination dare to dream – and why it's important that a vision statement capture your passion. When writing a vision statement, be sure you don't fall into the trap of only thinking ahead a year or two. Once you have your vision statement, it will have a huge influence on decision making and the way you allocate resources.

### Values

Values are traits or qualities that are considered worthwhile; they represent an individual's

highest priorities and deeply held driving forces. Values define how people want to behave with each other in the organization. Values are statements about how the organization will value customers, employees, vendors, and stakeholders. Value statements describe actions that are the enactment of the fundamental values held by most individuals within the organization. The values meld together to form your corporate culture. The values of your senior leaders are especially important in the development of your culture. These leaders have a lot of power in your organization to set the course and environment. If you think about your own life, your values form the cornerstones for all you do and accomplish. If you are truly living your values, they define where you spend your time. They do the same for your organization.

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*As you read above, creating a relevant and effective strategic plan is difficult, but with AchieveIt software developing sound strategy and managing execution has never been easier.*