

What is a Mission Statement?

A mission statement is a succinct statement that conveys your organization's reason for being. Coming up with an effective mission statement is worth the time and effort.

The Benefits of a Well-Defined Mission Statement

- It focuses your energy and clarifies your purpose—Be careful to keep your mission narrowly focused to ensure that you don't bite off more than you can chew.
- It will be your best public relations tool—It is a beacon that will attract people and resources to your cause. Make it compelling as well as clear.

Three Questions to Ask:

1. What are the opportunities or needs that we exist to address? (*the **purpose** of the organization*)
2. What are we doing to address these needs? (*the **business** of the organization*)
3. What principles or beliefs guide our work? (*the **values** of the organization*)

Humane Society of the United States
"To create a humane and sustainable world for all animals, including people, through education, advocacy, and the promotion of respect and compassion."

Three Tests to Pass:

1. the **Fluency Test**: a mission statement should be concise and state the obvious; if your members cannot recite it easily and fluently, start again
2. the **Ignition Test**: a mission statement should be self-igniting; it should inspire and motivate the passions of a targeted audience; use proactive verbs
3. the **Value Test**: a meaningful mission statement goes beyond the daily operating procedures; focus your mission statement on larger values that can be translated into short and long term goals

Other things to keep in mind:

- **A group effort**: an organization must be responsive to the entire group's motivations, not just one individual's; this should be reflected in the mission statement through collaboration in the crafting of the statement
- **Be selective and succinct**: focus on ideas that represent your organization's core values and services; ex: fundraising and publicity are critical to most group's survival, but they do not necessarily belong in a mission statement
- **Free of jargon**: do not use words that individuals outside of the organization may be unfamiliar with

Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream

"To make, distribute, and sell the finest quality all natural ice cream and euphoric concoctions with a continued commitment to incorporating wholesome, natural ingredients and promoting business practices that respect the Earth and the Environment."

This mission statement has inspired the creative, fun-loving, relatively audacious ice cream company many love, while also fostering a cause-related, value-intensive company that motivates and draws in members and stake-holders.

***ALWAYS KEEP IN MIND:
WHAT MOTIVATES ME?
WHAT MOTIVATES
OTHERS?***

Regular (Annual) Reviews

Extremely important for a student organization that inherently sees a lot of turnover is to adopt a regular review of the mission statement; at UAF, this can be done before the October 1st recognition date each year. By regularly reviewing an organization's mission statement you can insure that it remains relevant, inspiring, and responsive to the members' motivations.