

If you don't know where you're going, you'll wind up somewhere else. We asked local executives about the importance of a corporate mission statement.

Mission: Indispensable

Compiled by Amy Biter

Ashley Caldwell

Advertising Coordinator, H.G. Hill Food Stores

A mission statement defines the people and purpose of a business, therefore strategic planning should remain consistent with the mission statement at all times. Otherwise, the growth of a business could fall off-course. I would advise everyone to revisit their mission statement often.

Robert A. Frist Jr.

CEO, HealthStream

Last year, our company transitioned from NewOrder Media to HealthStream. One of the most important elements of this change was creating a shared vision for our company. To do this, we took all of our employees off-site for a day and hammered out a strategic plan. Every employee participated in planning the strategy and therefore took incredible ownership of the final plan. HealthStream recently established a leadership position in online health care education and signed several strong partners, including GE Medical Systems and Medsite.com. We were able to do these things primarily because our employees and partners were aligned by a common vision.

Joel C. Gordon

Chairman, Cardiology Partners of America

A mission statement gives you an idea of the objectives of the company, and it can serve as a road map in leading to the company's objective. It will not ensure success, but it can be helpful in formulating the policies of the company.

Susan Merrill

Administrator, The Women's Hospital
Centennial Medical Center

A mission statement is very important—it is the guiding statement of purpose for leadership. I use it during orientation for all associates on their first day at The Women's Hospital. The "commitment to the care and improvement of human life" is the starting place for our values and initiatives in putting our patients and families first. We write a business plan every year that outlines our key issues and strategies, which all need to link back to the mission statement.

Kenneth A. Paulson

Executive Director/SVP, The Freedom Forum

As a nonprofit foundation dedicated to First Amendment freedoms, we find a mission statement is essential. After all, when your goal is to spend resources and not build revenue, your organization is driven by ideas rather than a profit motive. Our commitment to help preserve and protect free expression provides an umbrella for all of our work, from conferences to classrooms to the Internet. A clear understanding of a mission statement enhances our informational and educational opportunities and gives the public a better sense of what we have to offer.

Frances W. Preston

President & CEO, BMI

The BMI mission statement is an important tool for our management team and is an integral part of our strategic planning process. It has been especially significant over the past decade as we have steered the company into the digital age.

Our mission statement focuses on BMI's core role in delivering the highest

level of service to our songwriters, composers, music publishers and the wide variety of business customers who use their music. It sets ambitious goals for management to attain and outlines the strategies we employ to accomplish those goals.

Lonnie J. Stout II

Chairman, President & CEO
J. Alexander's Corp.

At J. Alexander's our mission statement is a daily reminder of what we are about as an organization. We refer to it constantly in meetings, employee communications and in our day-to-day discussions about the business. When we are faced with a critical decision, we always ask how does this fit in with our mission. We believe that a mission statement helps us to create an almost cult-like culture where all employees and management are dedicated to accomplishing the same objective.

Cal Turner Jr.

Chairman & CEO, Dollar General Corp.

A true company mission statement defines the purpose of the entire organization and empowers all employees to be partners in fulfilling, life-enhancing work.

Pam Wright

President & CEO, Wright Travel

The company mission statement provides a consistent direction and focus for all employees. Our mission statement was developed by our staff at a strategic planning retreat. It is discussed, rethought and reconfirmed at each of our strategic planning retreats. The mission statement is given to each new employee and is stated in each proposal to new customers. The mission statement is a foundation and framework for stability in a fast-growth company. ♦

Next month,
Business Nashville asks,
"What do you look for in a
new hire?"

Send your responses to:
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