

# Creating a Mission Statement

By Robert G. Picard

- 1) Senior management needs to start and lead in the activity, but the statement should not be merely one of the company management. For it to be effective, it has to be a statement of everyone associated with the company, one that everyone views as their own, and one to which everyone can become committed.
- 2) Include all the company's stakeholders in the creation of the mission: managers, employees, customers, shareholders, community members, etc. Even if they all don't help write the document themselves, their views about the values, principles, and purposes of the firm help focus attention on their broader aspects of the company.
- 3) Use a facilitator or consultant to guide the process of creating a statement if no one in the firm is comfortable doing so.
- 4) At the beginning of the process, discuss the purposes of the statement, what it will be used for, and how it differs from other company descriptions and statements.
- 5) Expect to work through multiple drafts of a mission statement. Doing so helps sharpen central ideas and allows you to discard peripheral ideas.
- 6) Be more concerned about what ends up in the document than how pretty the process is.
- 7) Keep statements short and to the point. Say what you mean. A long, dull statement that does not say what you really mean and believe as a company is worthless.
- 8) Use language about values and principles that prescribes future actions.
- 9) Include the company's definitions of success, descriptions of its values, beliefs, philosophies, objectives, and relations with stakeholders.
- 10) Do not include platitudes designed only to placate stakeholders. These will taint the mission statement in the eyes of those who need to use it later.
- 11) Base the mission on what the firm actually does, its main thrusts, what it does uniquely or best, and what it strives to do and be.
- 12) Use the process to define the core of one's products and services. Be concerned with the functions of the products or services, not the particular form. In communications industries especially, the need for the functions have remained long after the forms of the products or services have changed.

- 13) Include statements of where the company is going, what it wants to be, and how it will get there.
- 14) Don't create a secret mission. Communicate the results to managers, employees, customers, shareholders, competitors and anyone who wants to read it. The statement helps position and strengthen the identity of the firm.
- 15) Use the mission. After its creation put it into practice as a guide for strategic decisions and day-to-day activities. When considering proposals within the company, ask how they relate to the mission. When disagreements between managers appear and choices must be made, refer to the direction the statement provides.