

How to Develop a Vision Statement

A unit's *vision* conveys a compelling, conceptual image of the desired future for the unit. It provides inspiration and challenge to all members of the unit towards an ideal of what the unit can become. It should be purposefully articulated to bridge the present and future and to serve as a critical impetus for change. Thus it should be brief enough to be memorable and complete enough to direct effort.

Several Criteria may be applied to evaluate a Vision Statement:

- Future-oriented, deriving from reasonable assumptions about the future
- Idealistic, envisioning a future that is beyond the present
- Appropriate, fitting with the unit's history and culture
- Inspirational, encouraging enthusiasm and commitment
- Purposeful, articulating an image of the desired future
- Ambitious, causing members of the unit to stretch to reach it.

Vision Statements answer these questions:

- What type of unit is this?
- What markets does it serve?
- What is the geographic scope?
- Who are the target customers?
- What are the key products and/or services?
- How big will the unit be?
- What will revenues be?
- How many employees will there be?

Developing a Vision Statement:

This section outlines an exercise you may employ to assist your group in defining its own vision. By using this exercise to develop your vision statement, you may be better assured that the vision statement that is developed is a shared vision.

At a staff meeting or retreat, take an hour to explore your vision. Breaking into small groups helps increase participation and generate creativity. Agree on a rough time frame, say 10 years. Ask people to think about the following questions: How do you want your unit to be different? What role do you want your group to play in your unit? What will success look like?

Then ask each group to come up with a metaphor for your group, and draw a picture of success: "Our group is like ...a mariachi band – all playing the same music together, or like a train –pulling important cargo and laying the track as we go, or ...” The value of

metaphors is that people get to stretch their minds and experiment with different ways of thinking about what success means to them.

Finally, have all the groups share their pictures of success with each other. One person should facilitate the discussion and help the group discuss what they mean and what they hope for. Look for areas of agreement, as well as different ideas that emerge. The goal is to find language and imagery that your group's members can relate to as their vision for success.

TIP: Instead of writing the vision statement in the group, ask one or two people to try drafting a vision statement based on the group's discussion, bring it back to the group, and revise it until you have something that your group members can agree on and that your leaders share with enthusiasm.

Example Vision Statements

Continuing Education & Outreach will become a nationally-recognized leader for providing opportunities which Eastern Kentucky University utilizes to enhance the quality of life for communities served by the development of innovative programs, collaboration and entrepreneurship.

Financial Affairs will be a provider of customer-focused, value-added financial and human resources services, delivered in an efficient, competent, and consultative manner.

The College of Arts & Sciences will be a leading liberal arts and sciences community in the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

Where does my Vision Statement go in TracDat?

Access the TracDat Manual Online:

www.oie.eku.edu

Identifying Unique Values:

*Values are
principles and/or standards that guide the decisions of a unit*

- *Civic Responsibility and Civility*
- *Diversity, Dignity, and Integrity*
- *Excellence and Innovation*
- *Opportunity and Access*
- *Shared Governance and Collaboration*
- *Student Success*

Planning groups are to identify any unique values of their unit in their strategic plan.