



Three Fs for the mission statement: what's next?

The mission statement

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Abstract

Purpose – This paper aims to expose the underlying reasons behind the failure of the mission statement to have a significant impact on performance and to recommend ways forward.

Design/methodology/approach – A comprehensive literature review is conducted and common themes and trends are revealed. These are then discussed under four major domains of the mission statement: definitions, functions, focus, and form. The impact of the mission statement on performance is then discussed. Examples of mission statements of some prominent organizations are provided to substantiate arguments. The paper ends with conclusions and recommendations.

Findings – The paper reveals the contradictions and confusion that beset research in this area. It demonstrates how concepts such as mission, vision, values, identity are mixed up with one another, leading to a slow progress in research and underutilization of the power of mission in practice.

Research limitations/implications – The paper recommends theoretical focus and practical flexibility. Theoretically, it suggests conceptual distinction between mission, vision, values, and other related concepts. Once this is done, it suggests the use of a “guiding statement” to flexibly describe any statement that integrates more than one of the above mentioned concepts in practice. The paper offers no empirical evidence of the usefulness of its recommendations.

Practical implications – The paper reveals the sources of ineffectiveness of the mission statement. The recommendations may help to minimize the confusion surrounding the functions, focus, and form of the mission statement. This may also help to advance the research in this area and inform the practice in the field.

Originality/value – The paper critically reads the literature to uncover the contradictions and confusion besetting research in this area and makes original recommendations.

Keywords Management effectiveness, Mission statements, Strategic planning

Paper type Conceptual paper

The mission statement is usually depicted as the starting point in the strategic planning process. Scores of business leaders, executives, consultants, and academics are attaching a great deal of importance to the development of effective mission statements. Research shows its increasing popularity as a strategic planning tool (Bart, 2001; Bartkus *et al.*, 2000). Yet, the claim of a real value of the mission statement is rarely substantiated and established.

This paper argues that the current literature on the mission statement is unlikely to deliver credible recommendations to organizations' leaders due to the confusion surrounding the conceptualization of the mission statement in at least three domains: its functions, its focus, and its form. This, however, is a result of a more profound problem: the apparent lack of agreement of what the mission statement is and whether and how it is different from vision, values, strategic intent, philosophy, and other relevant concepts used by business leaders to strategically manage their organizations.



The paper starts with a review of the multiple definitions given to the mission statement and proceeds to present its various functions and growing content. Next, the criteria for good quality (effective) mission statements, as offered by the literature, are presented and discussed. The paper goes on to discuss the impact of mission statements on organizational performance and ends with conclusions and recommendations.

What is mission statement?

The literature offers varied definitions of the mission statement. Some of the definitions are quite simple and focused while others are elaborate and wider in scope. Drucker (1994), for example, believes that a mission statement explicates the basic role of the enterprise in society. Collis and Rukstad (2008, p. 85) assert:

The mission statement spells out the underlying motivation for being in business in the first place – the contribution to society that the firm aspires to make.

Bartkus *et al.* (2000, p. 28) state:

The best mission statements simply define the company's business and suggest a future goal.

David and David (2003, p. 11) define mission statements as:

Enduring statements of purpose that distinguish one organization from other similar enterprises.

They assert that a mission statement answers the question “what business are we in?”

The above definitions of the mission statement are clearly focused on the dimension of the business purpose or reason(s) for its existence. There are, however, more elaborate and expanded definitions. They are usually extended either to be equated with, to be included in, or to include other related concepts spanning vision, values, beliefs, identity, behavior standards, and strategy. This expansion of the scope of definition causes a lot of confusion (Collis and Rukstad, 2008). Some researchers, for example, make the mission part of the vision statement (Lipton, 1996) while others do the opposite and include the vision within the mission statement (Analoui and Karami, 2002; Sidhu, 2003). Other forms of expanded definition of the mission statement exist in the literature. Williams (2008, p. 96), for example, believes that a mission statement conveys a corporation's nature and reason for being, in addition to: “where a firm is headed; how it plans to get there; what its priorities, values, and beliefs are; and how it is distinctive.” Other definitions by key contributors also show the mixing of the concept of mission with other related concepts such as vision and values (Campbell, 1992; Campbell and Yeung, 1991a, b; Lipton, 1996; Collins and Porras, 1997; Blanchard, 2007). To conclude this discussion, one can observe the centrality of purpose in all of above definitions of the mission statement. This is in fact the essence of the original definition of mission. The continuous drift from this origin, however, contributed to the current confusion and to the overlap of definitions of different concepts, especially those of mission, vision, and values.

The functions of mission statements

The disagreement over the definition of the mission statement in the literature extends to its functions. While the literature shows only limited agreement over the functions of

the mission statement (Bartkus *et al.*, 2000; Sidhu, 2003), the various views tend to converge. But these functions stretch as the definitions expand.

The basic functions of the mission statement are described as: defining the role of the business in society and the contribution it existed to make (Drucker, 1994); satisfying the employees' human needs for meaning and purpose (Campbell, 1992); focusing attention and resources on what really matters for the organization (Bart, 1997, 2001; Calfee, 1993; Ireland and Hitt, 1992); and guiding the development of objectives and strategies (Drucker, 2001; Lipton, 1996; Pearce and Roth, 1988; Strong, 1997).

The literature inclination for more functions of the mission statement is manifested in many studies adding more and more functions, such as: balancing the interests of competing stakeholder groups (Bart, 2001); conveying an organization's essential values to its stakeholders (Leuthesser and Kohli, 1997); giving a sense of corporate identity, and serving external public relations (Klemm *et al.*, 1991). Bart's (1998, p. 55) compilation of the functions of mission statements is typical in the literature. His list includes: providing a more focused basis for allocating resources; motivating and inspiring members throughout the organization to achieve a common goal or purpose; creating a balance among the competing interests of different stakeholders; creating performance standards; providing a common purpose or direction; defining the scope of the business; allowing the CEO to assert control over the organization; and developing shared values or culture within the organization.

Once the functions of the mission statement are defined the next logical step is to delineate the content necessary to carry them out. The following section critically reads the literature advice on the content and focus of the mission statement.

The content and focus of the mission statement

The content of the mission statement should naturally correspond to its intended functions. This, however, means that the disagreement over the functions of the mission statement and the continuous broadening of these functions are expected to be extended to its contents. This is what Bart and Baetz (1998, p. 824) have observed by stating:

There appears to be virtually no consensus as to what mission statements should or should not include.

This observation is also shared by Sidhu (2003), as well as Bartkus *et al.* (2000, p. 23), who say:

One of the most interesting aspects of mission statement is the limited agreement about their purpose and content.

Some of the early attempts to delineate the content of the mission statement and to define its focus are those of Want (1986), Pearce and David (1987), Nash (1988), Pearce and Roth (1988), David (1989), and Matejka *et al.* (1993). Want (1986, p. 48), for example, states:

The primary components of the corporate mission are: purpose; principal business aims; corporate identity; policies of the company; and values.

David and David (2003) compiled a comprehensive list of nine components that a mission statement should include: customers, products/services, geographic markets, technology, concern for survival/growth/profits, philosophy/values/beliefs, public image, employees, and distinctive competence. Along the same tracks, Strong (1997) offers a longer compilation of key components for an effective mission statement. Bart (1997) uses even a longer list of 20 possible components of mission statements.

Other researchers chose to develop a more structured approach. Campbell and Yeung (1991a, b), in what they call the Ashridge Mission Model, suggest that the mission statement should include four elements – purpose (reason for the company's existence), strategy (business definition, competitive position and distinctive competence), behavior standards, and values (beliefs and moral principles that underlie the company's culture). Other different structures are also developed by researchers such as: Lipton (1996), and Collins and Porras (1991, 1995, 1996, 1997).

In conclusion, one can say that, regardless of whether the mission content is presented as a compilation of items or as a well-structured model, the confusion of what constitutes mission, vision, and values is exacerbated and the practical advice given to leaders are, as a result, contradictory. The following section addresses more directly some of the practical suggestions presented in the literature on the quality of the mission statement and the form it should take.

Quality and form of the mission statement

A number of researchers continue to show a good deal of dissatisfaction with the current state of the field. They express concerns about the signs of poor quality in both the development and content of mission statements. The criticism directed to the mission statement ranges from being either a plain lie, superfluous, or irrelevant; to being vague, dull, or shallow. Probably, the most valid criterion to judge the quality of mission statement is how well it serves its intended functions.

The discrepancy between the company's reality and its mission statement is vividly expressed in the literature. Many observe that the majority of mission statements are no more than cynical statements for public-relations purposes that do not reflect reality (Wright, 2002); "nothing more than a passing fancy or a piece of corporate window dressing" Nash (1988, p. 155); that they consist largely of pious platitudes; and are often bland and disconnected from what the firm is capable of doing (Analoui and Karami, 2002); and that they "are not worth the paper they are written on and should not be taken with any degree of seriousness" (Bart, 1997, p. 12). Similar observations are abundant in the literature (Goett, 1997; Morphew and Hartley, 2006; Mullane, 2002).

The discrepancy between the rhetoric of the mission statement and the reality of organizations highlights the need to understand what constitutes a good mission statement that is supposed to be authentic in order to guide organizational behavior. A mission statement after all may do more harm than good if it is not the result of a clear sense of mission. The literature offers a number of requirements for a quality mission statement. These can be classified into three categories: function-related, content- or focus-related, and form-related characteristics.

Wilson (1992) offers an example of function-related characteristics. He emphasizes the following criteria of successful statements, which help serve its functions: clarity so that it can be easily understood and used to give direction; coherence so that it

convinces employees to carry it out; communications power, the ease of getting it through to become part of the organization culture; and flexibility so that it can be open to new signals of change. Other examples of function-related characteristics come from Brown (1998), who suggests that a good statement should be: focused, so that it recognizes the one or two aspects of company performance that are important for future success; understandable, to communicate direction to all employees; and inspirational, to make employees feel good about their company's direction. Brown (1998) also uses form-related characteristics. These dictate that a good statement should be: brief, so that employees can remember it; and verifiable, so that one can tell whether it has been achieved. Other examples of form-related characteristics suggest that a good mission statement should be: readable and worded in a way able to convey the desired emotion (Cochran *et al.*, 2008); use vivid language (Cochran *et al.*, 2008; Conger, 1991; Markides and Papadaxis, 1998); be brief (Bart and Baetz, 1998; Brown, 1998; Markides and Papadaxis, 1998); be memorable (Bart, 2001; Wickham, 1997). Content-related characteristics suggest that a quality mission statement should be: unique to the organization (Lynch, 2000; Stone, 1996; Sufi and Lyons, 2003; Wickham, 1997); current and relevant (Stone, 1996); pragmatic (Markides and Papadaxis, 1998); signal critical skills (Calfee, 1993; Klemm *et al.*, 1991); and comprehensive (Analoui and Karami, 2002; Bart, 1997, 2001; David and David, 2003; Pearce and David, 1987; Rarick and Vitton, 1995).

Given the above discussion of the literature on the mission statement; its definitions, its functions, its content, and the signs of quality measures; it is possible that the confusion and contradiction revealed so far will undermine the link between mission statements and firms' performance. The following section looks into research in this area.

The mission statement and organizational performance

The link between the development of mission statements by organizations and their financial performance is not conclusive. As discussed above, doubts exist about how authentic the mission statements are; how far they are enacted; and how close the rhetoric is to reality (Coulson-Thomas, 1992; Nash, 1988; Pfeffer and Sutton, 1999b). That authenticity issue is seldom addressed in mission-performance studies.

There are other legitimate concerns about the results of studies focusing on the mission-performance link. On one hand, high performance, as used in most studies, means only performance of the year of the study, or as in few cases extended to the previous two to three years (Bart and Baetz, 1998). On the other hand, the measurement of firms' performance, in most cases, is subjective and narrow, i.e. it is based on the perception of single respondents and is focused on one or on a very limited number of measures (Analoui and Karami, 2002). Furthermore, the results of most studies are based on the association between organizational performance and the mission statement that does not necessarily mean a cause and effect relationship. It is perfectly possible, for example, to argue that the high performing organizations are better at doing many things than the lower performing organizations including writing better mission statements. Indeed, in an early study, Pearce and David (1987, p. 109) hypothesize that "the mission statements of high performing *Fortune* 500 companies will exhibit more of the desired [eight] components than will those of low performing *Fortune* 500 firms."

In addition to the concerns raised above, the results of the empirical studies are still mixed. Some clearly concluded that there is no significant relationship between the two variables (David, 1989; Klemm *et al.*, 1991) and some have found weak links. Even the results of those studies that found significant relationship between the use of the mission statement and financial performance of organizations are weakened by serious research limitations such as: small sample size, convenience-based sampling procedure, the use of single-respondent, unreliable measures of some constructs, and subjective measures of performance. Bart and Baetz (1998) add to this list of limitations by admitting that their findings are limited by the fact that they did not take the time lag in the relationship between a firm's mission statement and its performance.

The lack of credible support for a strong link between having a mission statement and achieving superior performance is emphasized by a recent large-scale study. In *What Really Works*, arguably one of the most rigorous and comprehensive studies of the principles and practices of lasting business success, Joyce *et al.* (2004) concluded that the mission statement has no significant impact on long-term performance and, hence, excluded it from their formula for success. In addition, the mission statement does not appear in Peters and Waterman (1982) as a critical practice of the excellent companies in their *In Search of Excellence* study. Moreover, eight out of the eleven Collins's (2001) *Good to Great* companies, some of the world's top business schools, and a number of leading consulting companies have no mission statements (see the Appendix).

The only major study of lasting business success that appears to give the mission statement a primary role is *Built to Last* of Collins and Porras (1997). But this study does not lend credibility to the other cursory studies that try to show the strong link between having a mission statement and achieving high performance. The visionary companies featured in Collins and Porras (1997) are portrayed as having lived their missions, through making them the foundation of their organizational culture, and embedded them in every system and practice they made. Nevertheless, some of these very companies, for one reason or another, no longer have explicitly written mission or vision statements (see the Appendix).

Notwithstanding, I believe that some of these inconclusive studies of the mission-performance link are still worthy of consideration. They are valuable in the sense that their recommendations can be turned into research hypotheses that can be tested by new but more rigorous studies (Barabba *et al.*, 2002).

Conclusions and recommendations

The literature on mission statement has not seen great strides from the promising start of the early contributions of Drucker (e.g. Drucker, 1989, 1994), Want (1986), and Pearce and David (1987). In certain cases, regress can be observed as seen in the disregard of the authenticity of the mission statement, the neglect of the importance of the "sense of mission", and the ever increasing list of functions and content items. The structured models of mission statements, with none that can justifiably be superior to others, did not help much to reduce the confusion or ease the contradictions.

It is worth emphasizing that without a real passion for a genuine mission the mission statement becomes a mere platitude void of any meaningful inspiration and not capable of generating genuine commitment to produce superior performance. As such, it is more likely to develop cynicism rather than enthusiasm. In short, mission is not for everyone. Mission is for missionaries only. The suggestion of the proponents of

the mission statement that it leads to significant improvements in performance is really doubtful. The conditions and contexts under which this may be true is a fertile field for further investigations.

Related to the above is the observation that there is hardly any effort to differentiate between the mission statement of a single-business firm and that of a multi-business firm, or between the mission statements of businesses operating in their local markets and those of businesses operating in multiple international markets (Pearce and Roth, 1988). Most of the literature implicitly assumes that one-size-fits-all. The structural, cultural, contextual, and other contingencies can be significant between these types of businesses and may call for different characteristics of the most appropriate function, focus, or form of mission statements.

Furthermore, the literature barely shows how the formulation of a mission statement can inspire or trigger positive emotion. It does not clearly and assertively tell how a purpose or a reason for existence can be expressed so as to serve the intended functions. It does not specifically tell how a mission statement can be comprehensive, including as many elements, and brief and memorable at the same time. In short, leaders of business and other organizations have no clear criteria to prefer any one of the conflicting advice they receive from different sources in the literature.

One of the most worrying conclusions is that the literature shows a good deal of confusion and overlap between varying concepts such as mission, vision, values, and identity. This confusion and overlap may be a critical contributing factor of the literature's inadequate development in the areas of mission statement functions, focus, and form. This may also reflect a felt need to have an overall enduring "guiding statement" for the whole organization.

Two recommendations can be put forward here to deal with these two concerns. Theoretically, it may prove helpful to conceptually unravel mission, vision, values, identity, and other related concepts and define each separately. Subsequently, one could establish how best and under what conditions these concepts may interact to provide consistent guidance to organizations. This will probably clear the confusion and help advance the research in this area. Practically, subject to the specific needs of each organization, some or all of these concepts can be integrated into a broad statement, if this is deemed necessary. It may not be useful to give this broad statement the name of one of the combined concepts (mission, vision, values, etc.) as this will probably deepen the undisciplined use of these already overused words. I suggest, instead, to simply use the generic name of "guiding statement". So a "vision statement" will not include mission, and a "mission statement" will not include values, and an "identity statement" will not include strategic intent, and so on. Any of these statements, however, can be part of the broader but coherent and consistent "guiding statement". The "guiding statement" should be flexible and take the specific context, culture, structure, and needs of each organization into account; i.e. one-size may not fit all. As a result, a criterion like comprehensiveness can no longer be used to judge the quality of the mission statement (David and David, 2003). For some, the "guiding statement" could be short and include only a "mission statement"; while for others it might include, in addition to the mission statement, any one or more of the other related concepts such as vision, values, organizational identity, and business definition.

The suggestion of adding a "guiding statement" may prove useful in practice and it is perfectly consistent with the way many prominent organizations use to develop

these statements (see the Appendix). We either accept a stretched out definition of, say, mission statement that encompasses everything and becomes vague and blurred; or we may alternatively use a very specific and focused definition. Once the combined concepts of any “guiding statement” are well defined there will be no real problem judging how good they are and how well they fit together in one statement. If these concepts are somehow indistinguishable because of the overlap in their definitions there will be no objective and clear-cut way to identify, evaluate and judge their quality and usefulness. This suggestion might not be the best there is but it is one way forward. My concern is to bring this issue to the open discussion for all interested parties to consider.

It may be useful to illustrate the relevance of these recommendations and to reveal the discrepancy between what is recommended in the literature and the practice of prominent organizations. This will be done by examining real mission/vision statements of some of the “best run” companies, top business schools, and leading consulting firms.

The crux of my argument is to go back to the idea of simplicity and clear focus calling for reversing the trend of compilation and comprehensiveness. Abundant examples from prominent organizations (see the Appendix) are found to be inconsistent with the compilation advice typically recommended in the literature. Some of these statements, however, show the overlap between mission and vision by putting them in one statement (e.g. Campbell Soup’s), or an overlap between mission, vision, and values (e.g. Smithfield Foods). Other organizations have separately included mission, vision, and/or values in one document (e.g. Ford, and Valspar).

Only time will tell whether the authenticity, focus, and clarity demanded by the theoretical recommendation and the flexibility advocated by the practical recommendation will play any role in enhancing the value and impact of the mission statement and other related concepts.

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Company	Mission statement
Abbott	<p>Abbott is a global, diversified health care company devoted to the discovery, development, manufacture and marketing of pharmaceuticals, nutritional products for children and adults, and medical products, including devices, diagnostic tests and instruments. The company employs more than 68,000 people and markets its products in more than 130 countries.</p> <p>Our “promise for life”: Our “promise for life” is a statement that describes – for our customers, our communities, our shareholders and all of our stakeholders – what we believe in, what we value, and what we strive to deliver in our day-to-day work. For Abbott employees, our promise is our compass – guiding us in our actions and decision making, to ensure that we live up to the high expectations we have set for ourselves in order to serve our stakeholders better. Our promise challenges us to continually improve and inspires us to always aim higher.</p> <p>A promise for life: turning science into caring. We are here for the people we serve in their pursuit of healthy lives. This has been the way of Abbott for more than a century – passionately and thoughtfully translating science into lasting contributions to health</p> <p>Source: www.abbott.com/global/url/content/en_US/10.10:10/general_content/General_Content_00003.htm (accessed 1 April 2010)</p>
Circuit City	<p>Circuit City Stores, Inc. is a leading specialty retailer of consumer electronics, home office products, entertainment software, and related services</p> <p>Mission: no mission</p> <p>Source: www.circuitcity.com/sectors/aboutus/index.asp (accessed 1 April 2010)</p>
Fannie Mae	<p>Mission: Fannie Mae is a government-sponsored enterprise (GSE) chartered by Congress with a mission to provide liquidity, stability and affordability to the US housing and mortgage markets</p> <p>Source: www.fanniemae.com/kb/index?page=home&c=aboutus (accessed 1 April 2010)</p>
Gillette	<p>Vision: The Gillette Company’s vision is to build total brand value by innovating to deliver consumer value and customer leadership faster, better and more completely than our competition. This vision is supported by two fundamental principles that provide the foundation for all of our activities: organizational excellence and core values</p> <p>Source: http://manonamission.blogspot.com/2005/07/gillettes-g-mission-statement.html (accessed 1 April 2010)</p> <p>No such vision was found in Gillette’s own website</p>
Kimberly-Clark	<p>Mission: No mission. Motto: Delivering peace of mind within the pace of life</p> <p>Source: www.kimberly-clark.com/aboutus/ (accessed 1 April 2010)</p>
Kroger	<p>Mission: No mission</p> <p>Source: www.thekrogerco.com/index.htm (accessed 1 April 2010)</p>
Nucor	<p>“Nucor Corporation is made up of approximately 20,000 teammates whose goal is to ‘take care of our customers.’ We are accomplishing this by being the safest, highest quality, lowest cost, most productive and most profitable steel and steel products company in the world. We are committed to doing this while being cultural and environmental stewards in our communities where we live and work. We are succeeding by working together.”</p> <p>Source: www.nucor.com/story/chapter4/ (accessed 1 April 2010)</p>

(continued)

Table AI.
Mission statements of Collins’s (2001) “good-to-great” companies

Company	Mission statement
Philip Morris (Altria!!)	Our mission is to own and develop financially disciplined businesses that are leaders in responsibly providing adult tobacco and wine consumers with superior branded products Source: www.altria.com/en/cms/About_Altria/Our_Mission_and_Values/default.aspx?src=top_nav (accessed 19 July 2010)
Pitney Bowes	Mission: No mission. Helping our customers grow their business. Pitney Bowes is changing. For years, we helped customers to be more productive, particularly in mail operations. Now, customers also turn to Pitney Bowes to help them to grow their business, recognizing that productivity alone is not enough to win in today's environment Source: www.investorrelations.pitneybowes.com/phoenix.zhtml?c=83377&p=irol-irhome (accessed 1 April 2010)
Walgreens	The Walgreens Creed: we believe in the goods we merchandise, in ourselves and in our ability to render satisfaction. We believe that honest goods can be sold to honest people by honest methods. We believe in working, not waiting, in laughing, not weeping, in boosting, not knocking, and in the pleasure of selling our products. We believe that we can get what we go after, and that we are not down and out until we have lost faith in ourselves. We believe in today and the work we are doing, in tomorrow and the work we hope to do, and in the sure reward the future holds. We believe in courtesy, in kindness, in generosity, in cheer, in friendship, and in honest competition. Walgreens is still working to do things this way even in the internet age Source: www.walgreens.com/marketing/about/history/creed.jsp (accessed 1 April 2010)
Wells Fargo	The vision of Wells Fargo: we want to satisfy all our customers' financial needs and help them succeed financially Source: www.wellsfargo.com/invest_relations/vision_values (accessed 1 April 2010)

Table AI.

Company	Mission statement
3M	Our vision: 3M's commitment is to actively contribute to sustainable development through environmental protection, social responsibility and economic progress. To us, that means meeting the needs of society today, while respecting the ability of future generations to meet their needs Source: http://solutions.3m.com/wps/portal/3M/en_US/global/sustainability/ceo-statement/our-vision?WT.mc_id=keymatch (accessed 1 April 2010)
American Express	No mission but there is a set of values Source: http://home3.americanexpress.com/corp/os/values.asp?us_nu=dd (accessed 1 April 2010)
Boeing	No mission statement but a statement about culture and values Source: www.boeing.com/aboutus/culture/index.html (accessed 1 April 2010)
Citicorp	Our core mission is to be the global bank for institutions and individuals, and to serve our clients with distinction. We bring them unique value through our global reach and innovative solutions Source: www.citigroup.com/citi/fin/data/ar09c_en.pdf (accessed 1 April 2010) (annual report 2009 p. III)
Ford	One Ford mission: this is the one Ford plan that Ford Motor Company is using to transform our business. Read more about our mission and vision below. One team. One plan. One goal Source: www.ford.com/about-ford/company-information/one-ford (accessed 1 April 2010)
General Electric	Our culture: at GE, we consider our culture to be among our innovations. Over decades our leaders have built GE's culture into what it is today – a place for creating and bringing big ideas to life. Today, that culture is the unifying force for our many business units around the world Source: www.ge.com/company/culture/index.html (accessed 1 April 2010)
Hewlett-Packard	No mission statement, but there is a statement of shared values and corporate objectives [even hp-way in not found!!!] Source: www.hp.com/hpinfo/abouthp/corobj.html (accessed 1 April 2010)
IBM	IBM's business model: the company's business model is built to support two principal goals: helping clients succeed in delivering business value by becoming more innovative, efficient and competitive through the use of business insight and information technology (IT) solutions; and, providing long-term value to shareholders. The business model has been developed over time through strategic investments in capabilities and technologies that have the best long-term growth and profitability prospects based on the value they deliver to clients. The company's strategy is to focus on the high-growth, high-value segments of the IT industry [see the complete version] Source: www.ibm.com/investor/strategy/ (accessed 1 April 2010)
Johnson & Johnson	J&J management approach [including the Credo] Source: www.jnj.com/connect/about-jnj/management-approach/ (accessed 1 April 2010)
Marriott	No mission statement but there is a statement of core values Source: www.marriott.com/corporateinfo/culture/coreValues.mi (accessed 1 April 2010)

(continued)

Table AII.
Mission statements of Collins and Porras's (1997) "built-to-last" visionary companies

Company	Mission statement
Merck	<p>Our values: our business is preserving and improving human life. We also work to improve animal health. All of our actions must be measured by our success in achieving these goals. We value, above all, our ability to serve everyone who can benefit from the appropriate use of our products and services, thereby providing lasting consumer satisfaction. We are committed to the highest standards of ethics and integrity. We are responsible to our customers, to Merck employees and their families, to the environments we inhabit, and to the societies we serve worldwide. In discharging our responsibilities, we do not take professional or ethical shortcuts. Our interactions with all segments of society must be transparent and reflect the high standards we profess</p> <p>Source: www.merck.com/about/our-values/home.html?WT.svl=mainnav (accessed 1 April 2010)</p>
Motorola	<p>With the rapid convergence of fixed and mobile broadband internet and the growing demand for next-generation mobile communication solutions, our mission is to lead the next wave of innovative products that meet the expanding needs of our customers around the world (Annual Report 2009 March 2010 – About Motorola)</p> <p>Source: http://files.shareholder.com/downloads/ABEA-2FO3VV/882070662x0x359291/AD7222B4-C7FE-490B-882F-FFACDA370B7B/MOT_2009_Annual_Report_on_Form_10-K_Wrap.pdf (accessed 1 April 2010)</p>
Nordstrom	<p>No mission statement</p> <p>Source: http://shop.nordstrom.com/c/6022693/0~2377475~6022693 (accessed 1 April 2010)</p>
Philip Morris	<p>No mission statement</p> <p>Source: http://media.corporate-ir.net/media_files/irol/14/146476/2009_Annual_Report.pdf (accessed 1 April 2010)</p>
Procter & Gamble	<p>Our purpose: we will grow by touching and improving the lives of more consumers in more parts of the world . . . more completely</p> <p>Source: www.pg.com/en_US/investors/company_strategy.shtml (accessed 1 April 2010)</p>
Sony	<p>To become a leading world provider of networked consumer electronics, entertainment and services (from the Annual Report 2009 – The CEO Letter to Shareholders)</p> <p>Source: www.sony.net/SonyInfo/IR/financial/ar/8ido180000023g2o-att/SonyAR09-E.pdf (accessed 1 April 2010)</p>
Wal-Mart	<p>To help people save money so they can have a better life (Rob Walton, Chairman of the Board – from the Annual Report 2009)</p> <p>Source: http://media.corporate-ir.net/media_files/irol/11/112761/ARs/2009_Annual_Report.pdf (accessed 1 April 2010)</p>
Walt Disney	<p>No mission statement</p> <p>Source: http://amedia.disney.go.com/investorrelations/annual_reports/WDC-10kwrap-2009.pdf (accessed 1 April 2010)</p>

Table AII.

Company	Mission statement
Campbell Soup	<p>“Together we will build the world’s most extraordinary food company by nourishing people’s lives everywhere, every day” (from the Annual Report 2009) Source: http://files.shareholder.com/downloads/CPB/882162685x0x320834/0a34b982-31c3-4cb4-bebb-96301d23a4bd/CPB_2009_Annual_Report.pdf (accessed 1 April 2010)</p>
Cardinal Health	<p>Vision: to be the healthcare industry leader in providing a diverse, inclusive work environment that reflects the marketplace and communities where we do business while maximizing our competitive advantage through innovation, profit and adaptability Mission: our mission is to . . . identify, attract, and retain the best talent from each group; create a workplace where all talent can perform at its best; assess/understand the diversity of your marketplace; ensure that we are responding and aligning with our customers; ensure that our customers see themselves in our vision, actions and workplace; use external contributions to eliminate disadvantage and increase the diversity of the talent pool Source: www.cardinal.com/us/en/aboutus/commitment/index.asp (accessed 1 April 2010)</p>
Dollar General	<p>Our mission: serving others: for customers . . . a better life – for shareholders . . . a superior return – for employees . . . respect and opportunity. Our strategy: a customer-driven distributor of consumable basics. Our niche: profitable small stores delivering convenience and value. Our values: . . . Source: www.dollargeneral.com/AboutUs/Pages/MissionAndValues.aspx (accessed 1 April 2010)</p>
Duke Energy	<p>Our purpose is to create superior value for our customers, employees, communities and investors through the production, conversion, delivery and sale of energy and energy services Source: www.missionstatements.com/fortune_500_mission_statements.html (accessed 1 April 2010) Unable to access the company’s own website</p>
Flowers Foods	<p>As a team, our goal is to increase the value of our company to our shareholders. We accomplish this by: growing sales organically and through acquisitions; creating foods that meet the needs of customers and consumers; developing strong brands; providing extraordinary service; operating efficient bakeries; innovating to improve our performance; managing our resources wisely; and by fostering team spirit, appreciating diversity, and encouraging professional growth. Our commitment to these actions creates competitive advantages that make Flowers Foods’ success possible Source: www.flowersfoods.com/FFC_CompanyInfo/LeadershipPhilosophy/index.cfm (accessed 1 April 2010)</p>
GE	<p>Our culture: at GE, we consider our culture to be among our innovations. Over decades our leaders have built GE’s culture into what it is today – a place for creating and bringing big ideas to life. Today, that culture is the unifying force for our many business units around the world Source: www.ge.com/company/culture/index.html (accessed 1 April 2010)</p>

(continued)

Table AIII.
 Mission statements of Joyce et al.’s (2004) “what really works” winner companies

Company	Mission statement
Home Depot	<p>Values: the Home Depot's values guide the beliefs and actions of all associates on a daily basis. Our values are the fabric of the company's unique culture and are central to our success. In fact, they are our competitive advantage in the marketplace. Associate pride and our "orangeblooded" entrepreneurial spirit are distinctive hallmarks of our culture</p> <p>Source: http://corporate.homedepot.com/wps/portal/!ut/p/c1/04_SB8K8xLLM9MSSzPy8xBz9CP0os3gDdwNHH0sfE3M3AzMPJ8MAF0sDKND388jPTdUvyHZUBAB6afqn/dl2/d1/L2dJQSEvUUt3QS9ZQnB3LzZfMEcwQUw5MTU1RjBVSEExR0JUMzAwMDAwMDA!/ (accessed 1 April 2010)</p>
Nucor	<p>Nucor Corporation is made up of approximately 20,000 teammates whose goal is to "take care of our customers." We are accomplishing this by being the safest, highest quality, lowest cost, most productive and most profitable steel and steel products company in the world. We are committed to doing this while being cultural and environmental stewards in our communities where we live and work. We are succeeding by working together</p> <p>Source: www.nucor.com/story/chapter4/ (accessed 1 April 2010)</p>
Oracle	<p>No mission. A clear business definition is provided</p> <p>Source: www.oracle.com/us/corporate/index.htm (accessed 1 April 2010)</p>
Schering-Plough	<p>[Merged with Merck] To improve health and wellbeing around the world</p> <p>Source: www.merck.com/about/merck-schering-plough-merger/home.html (accessed 1 April 2010)</p>
Seagate Technology	<p>No mission statement</p> <p>Source: www.seagate.com/www/en-us/about/investor_relations/ (accessed 1 April 2010)</p>
Smithfield Foods	<p>Our mission: to be a trusted, respected and ethical food industry leader that excels at bringing delicious and nutritious meat and specialty food products to millions every day while setting industry standards for corporate social responsibility. Our core values: we will constantly strive:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To produce safe, high-quality, nutritious food. 2. To be an employer of choice. 3. To advance animal welfare. 4. To protect the environment. 5. To have a positive impact on our communities. <p>Source: www.smithfieldfoods.com/our_company/about_us.aspx (accessed 1 April 2010)</p>
Valspar	<p>Mission and beliefs: leadership, investment, commitment: the Valspar Corporation's mission is to be the best coatings company in the world as judged by our customers, shareholders, employees, suppliers and the communities in which we operate. To become the best, we must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be #1 or #2 and a technology leader in each of our target markets; Be in the top five in global sales; Be the leader in sales growth, earnings growth and return on investment; Be the lowest cost supplier through integrating technology and productivity improvements; Be environmentally responsible; Establish an accident-free work environment and above all else; Always act with integrity and comply with ethical codes of business conduct <p>Valspar beliefs: . . .</p> <p>Source: www.valsparglobal.com/corp/about/mission_beliefs.jsp (accessed 1 April 2010)</p>

Table AIII.

(continued)

Company	Mission statement
Walgreens Co.	<p>The Walgreens Creed: We believe in the goods we merchandise, in ourselves and in our ability to render satisfaction. We believe that honest goods can be sold to honest people by honest methods. We believe in working, not waiting; in laughing, not weeping; in boosting, not knocking; and in the pleasure of selling our products. We believe that we can get what we go after, and that we are not down and out until we have lost faith in ourselves. We believe in today and the work we are doing, in tomorrow and the work we hope to do, and in the sure reward the future holds. We believe in courtesy, in kindness, in generosity, in cheer, in friendship, and in honest competition. Walgreens is still working to do things this way even in the internet age</p> <p>Source: www.walgreens.com/marketing/about/history/creed.jsp (accessed 1 April 2010)</p>

Table AIII.

Business school	Mission statement
Accenture	To help companies and organizations to improve their performance and competitiveness
Arthur D. Little	Be the top management consulting firm linking strategy, innovation and technology to master our clients' business complexity to deliver sustainable results
Bain and Company	To help our clients to create such high levels of economic value that together we set new standards of excellence in our respective industries
Booz Allen Hamilton	Booz Allen Hamilton partners with clients to solve their most important and complex problems, making their mission our mission, and delivering results that endure
Boston Consulting Group	We seek to be agents of change, transforming both business and society (the short version)
Ken Blanchard Companies	To unleash the potential and power in people and organizations for the greater good
McKinsey & Company's (dual) mission	To help our clients make distinctive, substantial and lasting improvements in their performance and to build a great firm that is able to attract, develop, and retain exceptional people
Alex Partners	No mission, values, or vision statements
Deloitte Consulting LLP	No mission, values, or vision statements
Ernst & Young	No mission or vision statements, but there is a set of values
IBM Business Consulting	No mission, values, or vision statements
KPMG	No mission or vision statements, but there is a set of values
Mercer LLC	No mission, values, or vision statements
Monitor Group	No mission, vision, or values statements
Oliver Wyman	No mission, values, or vision statements
PricewaterhouseCoopers	No mission, values, or vision statements
Towers Watson	No mission, values, or vision statements

Source: Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia (accessed March 27, 2010). The webservice "vault.com" prepares a list of the most prestigious 50 consulting companies each year, a measure that favors larger firms. The most prestigious 15 consulting companies in 2010 are: McKinsey & Company (8.390); Ernst & Young LLP (5.914); The Boston Consulting Group (7.978); Oliver Wyman (5.860); Bain & Company (7.874); Accenture (5.711); Booz & Company (6.514); IBM Global Business Services (5.668); Deloitte Consulting LLP (6.107); KPMG (5.585); Monitor Group (6.071); Towers Perrin (5.535); PricewaterhouseCoopers (5.998); AlixPartners (5.529); Mercer LLC (5.947)

Table AIV.
Mission statements of leading consulting companies 2010

Business school	Mission statement
The University of Notre Dame Mendoza College of Business	To build a premier Catholic business school that fosters academic excellence, professional effectiveness and personal accountability in a context that strives to be faithful to the ideals of community, human development and individual integrity
Virginia McIntire School of Commerce	The McIntire School of Commerce is a professional school engaged in the creation and dissemination of knowledge that significantly influences the ideas and actions of students, scholars, and business leaders. The McIntire School aspires to be the best and most innovative undergraduate business program in the world and to offer high-quality, innovative specialized master's degree programs. Two important elements of achieving program innovation are integrated and action-oriented learning and exploiting the strengths of traditional and virtual faculty
MIT Sloan School of Management	The mission of the MIT Sloan School of Management is to develop principled, innovative leaders who improve the world and to generate ideas that advance management practice
The Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania	No mission statement found
Johnson School at Cornell University	No mission statement found
Johnson School at Cornell University	No mission statement found
Haas School of Business, University of California Berkeley	To develop leaders who redefine how we do business
Goizueta Business School, Emory University	Goizueta Business School will be regarded as a thought leader, creating and disseminating knowledge at the cutting edge of management practice and developing principled leaders for global enterprise who drive performance and value creation
Michigan Ross School of Business	No mission statement found
The Carroll School of Management – Boston College	The Carroll School of Management educates undergraduates preparing for careers in management, graduate students aspiring to greater responsibilities in a complex global economy and practitioners and executives seeking renewed vision and new skills for that economy. Vigorous teaching and learning, and research that advances business theory and enhances management practice are crucial means to these ends. Our current efforts are a partnership of students, faculty, staff, the business community, and the broader academic community. We seek and value the support and counsel of our alumni and the wider business community. We aspire to be an effective and caring organization for our immediate community, and we strive to direct all our efforts for the service of the many communities – local, national and global – which sustain us
McCombs School of Business – The University of Texas at Austin	The core purpose of the McCombs School of Business is to educate leaders that create value for society. Our primary goal is to become one of the most prominent business schools in the world (from the strategic plan document 2009)
Harvard Business School	We educate leaders who make a difference in the world

Table AV.
Mission statements of
some top undergraduate
business programs 2010

About the author

Azaddin Salem Khalifa earned his DBA degree at Strathclyde University, Scotland. He is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Management, Marketing, and Public Administration, University of Sharjah, United Arab Emirates. His research interest is focused on different issues and dimensions of value and strategy in different contexts. Azaddin Salem Khalifa can be contacted at: azaddin@sharjah.ac.ae

The mission
statement

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