

## Mission, Vision... Poppycock!

**S**ECRETLY NOW, do you cringe when you hear people talk about missions, visions and values? Do you feel like the business world got lost in the semantic twilight zone years ago? Ever seen a company spend tons of time, energy and money trying to navigate the mumbo-jumbo of strategy development while the obvious was neglected?

I've felt it and I've seen it so I know just how you feel. Somehow, the entire process of developing a strategy, which is a completely natural process to many, has been derailed and obfuscated. There is more focus on the quality of the vision statement than the value of the vision it is meant to express. Your mission statement may be in limbo because it is said to be missing a critical required component even though your personal sense of mission may be strong and clear as can be. Books and speakers seem to differentiate themselves by promoting yet another set of definitions and process handcuffs. Bright people are silenced by their embarrassment at having to ask repeatedly for clarification.

Why all this attention on definitions, perfectly crafted statements, and aesthetically framed proclamations, rather than a clear sense of direction?

I can't answer that question, but what I'd like to do is provide a simple example to show you just how natural is the process of developing a mission, vision, values, and strategy. I'm not saying that a good strategy is easy to come by. I am saying that one is much harder to come by if you focus so much energy on the process as opposed to the purpose.

### All Natural Ingredients

Let's start with a familiar itch: "The grass is greener on the other side of the fence. I wish we were over there."

"Why?"

"Because if the grass is so green, think of the vegetables we could grow! I want to be the Pioneer Valley's answer to the Jolly Green Giant, but without the steroids!" (Our Vision!)

"But wait a minute, is that all we care about? Growing vegetables?"

"Yes, we want to grow wonderful vegetables so people far and wide can eat well and be healthy." (Our Mission!)

"But why do we have to move?"

"Because this yard is small, the soil poor, and the shade heavy."

"OK. But if we are going to move, maybe the yard next door is not the best choice. What should we look for? What kinds of vegetables should we grow?"



*Ann Latham*

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