



## ***MISSION STATEMENTS***

This document will provide an explanation of a co-op business's mission statement, a key aspect of strategic planning. A mission statement is a first step to defining a co-op's reason for existence, often to meet an identified need. Any entity, from a church to individual can benefit from articulating a mission statement but this document focuses on co-ops.

A mission statement embodies a co-op's philosophies, goals, ambitions and way of life. Any entity operating without a mission statement runs the risk of wandering through the world without having the ability to verify that it is on its intended course.

Mission statement can explore the co-op's morals, strategic influence, geography or expected growth. Frequently the mission is supported by a set of values that define the standards and direct the mission's implementation.

A mission differs from the vision, in that the vision outlines what the organization wants to be with a focus on the future. A mission is the starting point for any director, manager or employee evaluating a strategic decision.

Most often, a new co-op starts by drafting their vision and it will guide the mission statement and the rest of the strategic plan. Frequently in established co-ops, the existing missions will guide the vision statement and the rest of the strategic plan.

Co-ops must know its fundamental purpose. It is important to keep the desired result in sight from the start.

### **Mission Statement Ought To:**

- Distinguish the co-op from all other entities
- Serve as a framework to evaluate business activities
- Express and define the reason for the co-op's existence, what it does and aspires
- Limited enough to exclude some ventures but also allow for creative growth
- Motivate and inspire commitment and support
- Be free of industry jargon
- Be clearly stated and easy to understand
- Be short and simple enough so everybody in the co-op can remember and repeat

### **Conflict Resolution:**

#### **Keeping the Co-op on Track**

Mission statements resolve differences among rival stakeholder groups. Co-ops have many stakeholders, including members, a Board, managers/unions, lenders, suppliers/customers, the broader community. The mission provides direction in a time of conflict.

## Sample Mission Statements

Note how these statements reflect the purpose, business and values of the respective co-op.

Sunshine Propane

*To be the best, full service Propane Company in the North Olympic Peninsula*

Group Health Co-op

*To design, finance and deliver high-quality health care*

REI

*We inspire, educate and outfit for a lifetime of outdoor adventure and stewardship*

Oregon Woodland Co-op

*We serve the Oregon woodland community by providing services and assistance through the power of cooperative actions of our members*

Farmers Cooperative Creamery

*To supply top quality milk, butter and powder products, operate an efficient manufacturing plant, create an enjoyable work place, and generate the highest dividends possible for our member/owners*

InterTribal Bison Co-op

*Restoring buffalo to Indian Country to preserve our historical, cultural, traditional and spiritual relationship for future generations*

Organic Valley

*To create and operate a marketing cooperative that promotes regional farm diversity and economic stability by the means of organic agricultural methods and the sale of certified organic products.*

Olympia Food Co-op

*To contribute to the health and well-being of people by providing wholesome foods and other goods and services, accessible to all, through a locally-oriented, collectively managed, not-for-profit cooperative organization that relies on consensus decision making*

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### For more info:

[www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mission\\_statement](http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mission_statement)

[www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strategic\\_planning](http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strategic_planning)

[www.nwcdc.coop/Resources/CSS/CSS03CreatingVision.pdf](http://www.nwcdc.coop/Resources/CSS/CSS03CreatingVision.pdf)