

create compelling company statements:

A new approach for the social sector

by marc levy & zoe pappas

We have facilitated scores of conversations with clients about their visions and missions.

The best and most compelling company statements can bring real clarity to an organisation. They can provide a frame of reference to inform important scope decisions and strategic choices (we will do this and not that). They can also galvanise teams, help cascade clear thinking throughout an organisation, foster sharper, more consistent decision-making, and create a helpful shared language between boards and executives.

However vision and mission statements can sometimes get a bad wrap.

Poorly developed, they can be bland and meaningless, packed with weasel words and ‘fluff’, or – worse still – fail to capture the imaginations of those within an organisation and do their job. Conversations about them can get mired in unproductive and confused definitional disputes; one person’s mission is another person’s vision.

We have developed a new way of conceptualising an organisation’s vision and mission that transcends this muddy terrain, in particular for our social sector clients.

We ask our social sector clients to articulate two things:

1. the change they want to see in the world
2. their distinctive role in creating that change.

We’ve found that this discussion – about an organisation’s impact in the world and the distinctive role they will play – makes for a more constructive conversation with a board or executive team. It brings the conversation back to what matters to the group and what they can control, rather than woolly platitudes, and leads to outcomes that they feel more passionate about. And passion is key. With the end products in hand, the group should – as a client of ours recently said – ‘walk a little taller’.

Our prescription for better company statements extends to other dimensions. Keep the statements brief. Don’t waste a word. Use evocative language. Overreach; if you don’t blush you aren’t trying hard enough. When you plan the meeting or workshop at which you will develop these statements, allow enough time, adopt a structured process and have someone facilitate the conversation who knows how to guide the group through what can be tricky and emotional terrain.

A well conceived vision or mission can set an organisation up for success; but to meet this high bar, you’ve got to be clear about what you are solving for and how you are going to go about it.

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If you would like Right Lane to help you create a compelling company statement, contact **Marc Levy**:

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