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The Mission Statement

A statement of business mission is the bedrock for all other planning and operating decisions. It explicitly tells about the identity and purpose of an organization. For example:

Mason's Berry Farm grows fresh strawberries, blueberries, and raspberries for consumers throughout the Pacific Northwest. Carefully cultivating the most succulent berry strains and distributing through major supermarket chains, MBF seeks to provide excellent value for the shopper, a good livelihood for employees and owners, and enhancements to its natural environment.

Growers who have not stated the business mission may find it a good start to think about and discuss with hired managers or others in the family the following questions:

- Who are we as an organization?
- What do we do and why?
- Who are our customers, and who else provides what we need to succeed as a business?
- How do we know how well we are doing?

Some managers use the mission statement to declare important values in the organizational culture, their long-term visions for business development, and family considerations related to the business. For example:

Nelson Dairy's mission is to produce and sell milk efficiently enough to provide a good standard of living for three families that will own and operate the business. It is to be sustained as a strong family business in which participating family members treat each other with respect, communicate openly and honestly, and actively support institutions in our community.

Even more specific, shorter-term aims may be incorporated into this vision:

Nelson Dairy will be generating profits by the end of 2005 sufficient for Jack and Dolores to retire and for Jerry, Sue, and Henry to enter the business under a mutually agreeable equity and management decision making arrangement.

Managers who know where they want the business to go are more likely to get it there. What is the vision for one year, five years, or 10 years from now? Will it suffice to stay the course, or will plans be drawn up to expand, alter product line, introduce new methods, or change in other ways?

Goals as Targets for Success



- What do I want to achieve and by when, through use of my time, abilities, land, equipment, and financial resources?
- What part will this ranch play in the lives of each member of my family and vice versa?
- How much more net income can we generate from this land over the next 10 years by replanting to another variety?
- What kind of relationships do I want to have with my employees, suppliers, and customers, and how will I know if I achieve them?
- What do I really want out of life?

Most people think about the future of their lives, families, and businesses. In doing so, they ask and at least tentatively answer questions like those above about hopes, dreams, ambitions, and concerns. Answers to such questions usually reveal or explicitly describe a goal—a purpose, result, or state of affairs to work toward.

Goals reflect personal values and beliefs, apparent opportunities, resource limitations, and relative priorities, especially when choices among them have to be made. They not only help to establish a sense of direction but also serve as benchmarks for measuring levels of performance and accomplishment, for individuals, as well as businesses. When goals are well defined, reasonable, internally compatible, and shared, they support agricultural operations in the short and long terms. People are more likely to achieve their goals when they know what they are trying to accomplish, by when, and how.

Management activity is goal-directed, and managers can use goals productively with employees to:

1. Guide performance

Goals that are clear and specific help focus the use of personnel time and energy.

Two stonecutters with different supervisors were asked what they were doing. One of them replied, “I’m cutting this stone into blocks.” The second replied, “I’m part of a team that’s building a cathedral.”