

Vision & Mission: Unknown or confused

Are we really sure it's clear what they mean? As the strategic approach shows they are essential milestones in Leadership. As consultants we often see how they are misused by many companies, sometimes they are unclear or mistaken. Many people talk about Vision and Mission, do they know what they really are?

Just some weeks ago I was called into a client's office for a consultation. Here they advised me about a consultancy they had had about their Vision and Mission statements. They then showed them. Here starting the matter, or the nightmare begins...

Their Vision:

"We want satisfy our clients' needs through our quality of products and services through innovation, improve their loyalty and enhance our Brand awareness as industry leaders."

Their Mission:

" We want to become an industry leader through innovation and the quality of the product and be able to perform better than our competitors in understanding clients' needs and satisfying them."

Suddenly I asked: "May I know the consultant name.....?" . "Sure, she is, do you know her?"

"Yes I do, she was an NLP trainer on my masterclass. She is a psychologist, she helps people as a life coach...."

That's the issue, when the market is shrinking everybody offers a wider range of products even the ones they have not mastered. Who is aware of this? Does the client have the knowledge to evaluate it? Indeed all of us are looking for provider who possess a better knowledge than we do.

What the VISION is

The Vision purpose is to spot how the environment will become in the future. This is the difference in vision thinking ability. When Henry Ford said *"Horses won't be on the road anymore"* he was referring to an emerging future which people around him weren't able to see. When Bill Gates stated *"A personal computer on every desktop"* he was referring to a big shift in labour which no one had understood before him. Bill

Gates added " ...all of them will run a Microsoft OS ! " it was a his dream. Now reality has overpass imagination: that there are many more computers than desktops.

Looking around us we can find some brand's statement which so often miss this logical meaning. If we see an great Italian branded University, the SDA Bocconi, for example, we will find a kind of Mission & Vision melted together into one single statement which does not meet logical requirements on building a Vision:

"Contribute to people and organisations development creating and spreading out innovative knowledges on the management field."

Often the Vision has a reduced value if compared to the entrepreneur's idea: the Mission.



Our Mission

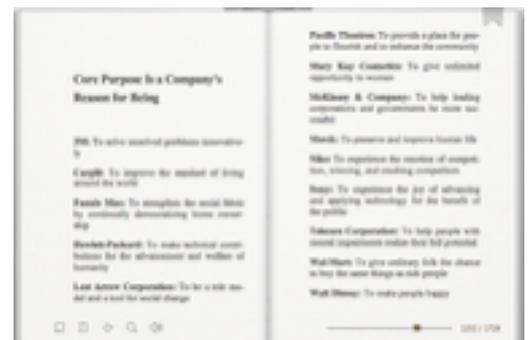
Our Roadmap starts with our mission, which is enduring. It declares our purpose as a company and serves as the standard against which we weigh our actions and decisions.

- To refresh the world...
- To inspire moments of optimism and happiness...
- To create value and make a difference.

Our Vision

Our vision serves as the framework for our Roadmap and guides every aspect of our business by describing what we need to accomplish in order to continue achieving sustainable, quality growth.

- **People:** Be a great place to work where people are inspired to be the best they can be.
- **Portfolio:** Bring to the world a portfolio of quality beverage brands that anticipate and satisfy people's desires and needs.
- **Partners:** Nurture a winning network of customers and suppliers, together we create mutual, enduring value.
- **Planet:** Be a responsible citizen that makes a difference by helping build and support sustainable communities.
- **Profit:** Maximize long-term return to shareowners while being mindful of our overall responsibilities.
- **Productivity:** Be a highly effective, lean and fast-moving organization.



Telecom Italia think it is showing a Vision but in reality s their Mission:

“Be an evolved Service Provider able to provide communication services connected to an information and digital contents management capacity in a compatible way with the environment and the community”

Sometimes people make mistakes in what Vision is when they say: “ ... *It is the entrepreneur’s idea and it shows what the company want to become in the future*”

- **La vision.** È l’idea dell’imprenditore e rappresenta ciò che l’azienda intende diventare. **Microsoft:** “Un personal computer su ogni scrivania, e ogni computer con un software Microsoft installato“. ... Questi esempi sono proiezioni di uno scenario futuro che rispecchia i valori e lo spirito dell’impresa.

“Questi due aspetti in realtà non sono distanti ma complementari. Per poter realizzare la vision è necessario procedere per progetti, che di volta in volta si strutturano attraverso una mission mediante obiettivi.”

(from a company website)

Then: “*These two issues are not distinguished, but close and complementary. To be able to realise the vision it needs to proceed by projects, each one of them have to be structured through a Mission by targets*”

Please, don’t ask me what does it mean....

7-Eleven has a good mission here, but they miss the Vision statement purpose:



My opinion is that they did not write the Vision statement as well as they

could, at least not completely under the advice of J.C. Collins and J.I. Porras model. These have developed a well structured model about Vision statement in their **Building Your Company’s Vision** on HBR -10 Must Read-. Their model shows how the Vision has to include the ideas (**Core Ideology**) and the future imagination (**Envisioned Future**). In this way the Vision doesn’t have to declare any entrepreneurship target. But it can describe

purposes and values.

The Mission Statement, Brand Vision, and Values of 7-Eleven Convenience Stores:

The mission statement of 7-Eleven convenience stores is focused not on what it sells or how much it sells, but rather on the 7-Eleven customer experience, and how that can impact a customer’s day. The mission statement of the 7-Eleven retail chain is:

“At 7-Eleven, our purpose and mission is to make life a little easier for our guests by being where they need us, whenever they need us.”

Additionally, the 7-Eleven chain has an official corporate Vision:

“Our Vision is to Be the Best Retailer of Convenience. Being the best at what we do means each 7-Eleven employee has a chance to brighten someone’s day and make life a little easier, whether it is service with a smile in the store or ensuring we have the freshest food available, day in and day out.”

The Vision is first a sky view, an idea about the future. **Nokia** developed several Visions, once the old one had been reached they developed a new one.

- **Nokia:**
 - 1995 – “Our vision: Voice Goes Mobile”
 - 2005 – “Our vision: Life Goes Mobile”

The Vision function lies on showing the idea we have about the future, one in which we strongly believe. It is a future which we want to arrive, because to have a role in that future we have to be able to foresee it better!

Like **Enrico Mattei**, one of the greatest Italian entrepreneurs on the history, said:

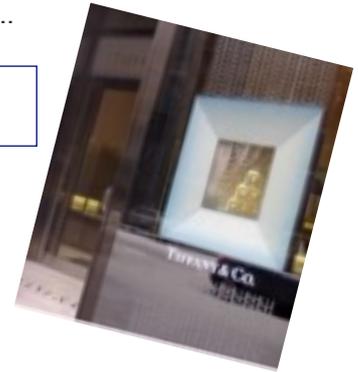
“Il futuro è di chi lo sa immaginare”

- The future belongs to whom knows how to imagine it.

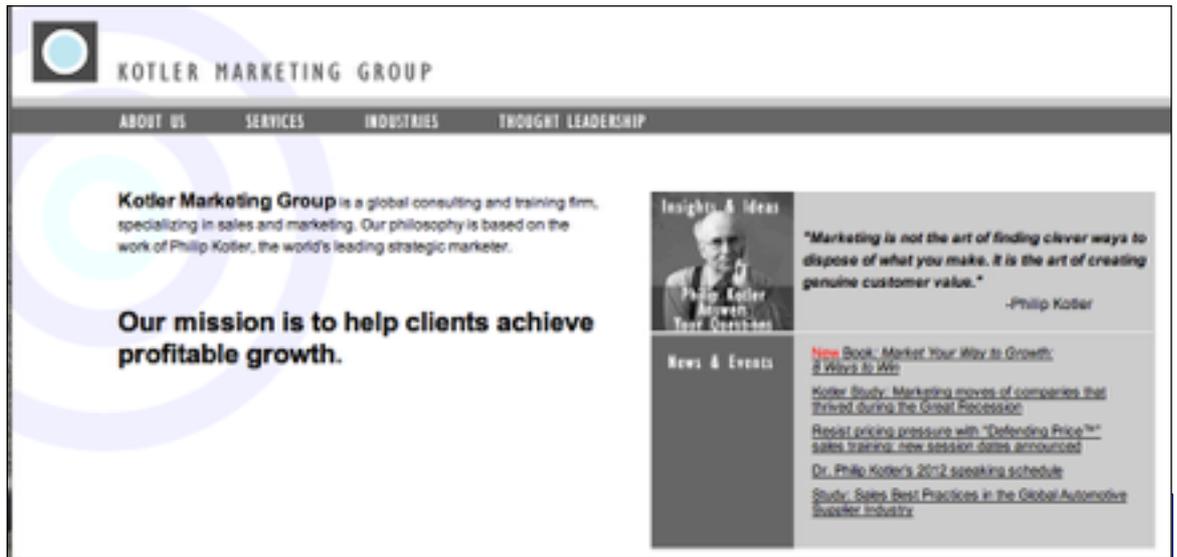
What the *Mission* is

On the Vision statement Brands say what they want to do to create value for customers and how to shape the future in which they believe. Shape identity by actions. The examples will show it...

"To be the world's most respected and successful designer, manufacturer and retailer of the finest jewellery."



Furthermore **Philip Kotler**. He does not need to be clarified:



And Steve Jobs declared:

"Apple is committed to bring the best personal computing products and support to students, educators, designers, scientists, engineers, business persons and consumers in over 140 countries around the world."

A Mission's function lies on the need to clarify the **brand identity** by pursuing and acting on it. Mission has to be concise: not many words needed. People have to understand the **passion** on doing the things better and better. Passion will carries **something exceptional**. A Mission has to be motivational for people, showing them values and purposes which guide them to make strategic choices. Stakeholders understand the Mission message and it reminds them of the company identity and its social purpose.

The company who knows its mission, knows what they do and why they do what they are doing. **Brand Identity** becomes real and shows everyone the road map to success.

Not all companies declare their Vision, it's not mandatory. The advice is: **if you do it, do it better!** Otherwise is better not do it at all. You will save time and will not risk making a mistake which can creates misunderstandings with stakeholders and management.

