

## **Plan for Success: Values, Vision, Mission**

When we think of having a successful business, most times our focus immediately goes to our financial state and how much market share we have. It is usually later in the process of business planning that we get around to determining our Values, Vision, and Mission. Thinking in this order is actually backwards, as one of the main drivers in our decision making process comes from our company's values, vision, and mission.

Because of the huge scope of this topic, this article touches briefly on the importance of these three words as they relate to writing your business plan. It is imperative to spend the amount of time needed in determining your values, vision, and mission as this area is one of the keys to the successful performance of your business. Many consider this area as a soft, emotional side of the business and therefore not as important as many of the other business aspects. However, the passion that drives your business, and employees, is discovered during this phase of planning.

Values, Vision, and Mission give direction and focus for defining what you want your business to be and what you want to accomplish.

- It is important to first determine the Values (a set of beliefs or standards) which are to be exemplified throughout your organization and drive employee behavior to accurately represent your business.
- These values, as internal drivers of the business, are a foundation for your Vision, which is an internal statement that provides focus to employees as they guide the workings of your business.
- The Mission statement relates your long-term strategy and the focus is to the external workings of your business, i.e. the customers.

It is imperative that all three (values, vision, mission) are aligned with each other to achieve desired results.

Also of importance is the alignment of the values, vision, and mission between both your business life and personal life. This is essential because there comes a time in your business career, whether as owner or employee, when you ask yourself, "Why am I doing this?" The answer is typically found at the personal level and is used to guide you through changes you make to find the alignment between "business" and "personal". Determining your values, vision, and mission takes time, so as you "Plan for Success" make certain you allocate enough time to explore this equally important aspect of your completed, working business plan.