VMOSA

Idea In Short

Every person or organization has a dream. However, the most successful people and organizations take that dream and find a way to make it a reality. That's what VMOSA helps groups do. Organizations can leverage the VMOSA strategic planning process to define their vision, set goals, figure out how to reach those goals, and then come up with practical ways to make the required changes.

VMOSA (Vision, Mission, Objectives, Strategies, and Action Plans) is a practical planning process that organizations can use to define a vision and develop practical ways to implement change. VMOSA helps an organization set and achieve its short term goals, while keeping sight of its long term vision. This strategy planning process helps develop a clear mission, build consensus and ground the strategy in the organizational context. VMOSA is a practical planning process that can be used by any organization or initiative. This comprehensive planning tool can help the organization by providing a blueprint for moving from dreams through actions to positive outcomes.

- The VMOSA process grounds the organization's dreams. It makes good ideas possible by laying out what needs to happen to achieve the organizational vision
- By creating this process in a group effort (taking care to involve all the relevant stakeholders, including those affected by the problem and those with the ability to affect change), it allows the organization to build consensus around its focus areas and the necessary steps it organization should take
- The process gives the organization an opportunity to develop its vision and mission together with those in the organization that will be affected by what the outcome of the strategy planning process
- The strategy planning process is much more likely to address the organization''s real needs and desires, rather than what it thinks they might be
- VMOSA helps increase ownership of the vision and mission, putting everyone on the same page and greatly increasing the chances that the change efforts will be

successful
- It allows the organization to focus on its short-term goals while keeping sight of its long-term vision and mission

Vision (the dream)

The vision communicates what the organization believes is the ideal final state i.e, how things would look if the issues important to it were perfectly addressed. This utopian dream is generally described by one or more phrases or vision statements, which are brief proclamations that convey the organization's dreams for the future. By developing a vision statement, the organization makes the beliefs and governing principles clear to the greater organization and all stakeholders, such as its staff, investors, customers, suppliers, etc.

> For example, an early Microsoft vision statement was a computer on every desk and in every home.

A vision statement matters because it outlines the common goal of everyone in the company. Businesses that are working toward a higher aspiration are more appealing to current and future employees.

Examples

A few inspiring vision statements are:

- Our vision is to be earth''s most customer-centric company; to build a place where people can come to find and discover anything they might want to buy online. [Amazon]
- Making the best ice cream in the nicest possible way. (Ben & Jerry''s)
- Our vision is a world in which all people''s basic needs – such as shelter, clean water, sanitation, food, and reliable power – are fulfilled in an environmentally sustainable way, and a company that improves the quality of the environment and the communities where we live and work. [Caterpillar]
- To provide access to the world''s information in one click. [Google]
- To fill the earth with the light and warmth of hospitality by delivering

exceptional experiences – every hotel, every guest, every time. (Hilton Hotels & Resorts)
- To create a better everyday life for the many people. [IKEA]
- If it''s smart and connected, it''s best with Intel. [Intel]
- Create economic opportunity for every member of the global workforce. [LinkedIn]
- To be a self-organized people actively creating a just democratic and sustainable world where power and resources are shared, everyone lives in dignity, and poverty and inequality are no more. [Oxfam]
- Build the best product, cause no unnecessary harm, use business to inspire and implement solutions to the environmental crisis. [Patagonia]
- Shape the future with innovation and intelligence. [Samsung]
- To become the world''s most loved, most flown and most profitable airline. (Southwest Airlines)
- We believe passionately in the power of ideas to change attitudes, lives, and, ultimately, the world. [TED]

Characteristics

There are certain characteristics that most vision statements have in common. In general, vision statements should be:

- Understood and shared by members of the organization
- Broad enough to encompass a variety of local perspectives
- Inspiring and uplifting to everyone involved in your effort
- Easy to communicate and comprehend

Mission

Developing mission statements are the next step in the action planning process. An organization's mission statement describes what the group is going to do, and why it's going to do that. Mission statements are similar to vision statements, but they're more concrete, and they are definitely more "action-oriented" than vision statements. The mission might refer to a problem, such as an inadequate housing, or a goal, such as providing access to health care for everyone. And, while they don't go into a lot of detail, they start to hint - very

broadly - at how your organization might go about fixing the problems it has noted.

Guiding Principles

Some general guiding principles about mission statements are that they are:

Concise: Although not as short a phrase as a vision statement, a mission statement should still get its point across in one sentence **Outcome-oriented:** Mission statements explain the overarching outcomes the organization is working to achieve **Inclusive:** While mission statements do make statements about the organization's overarching goals, it's very important that they do so very broadly. Good mission statements are not limiting in the strategies or sectors of the organization that may become involved in the project.

While vision and mission statements themselves should be short, it often makes sense for an organization to include its deeply held beliefs or philosophy, which may in fact define both its work and the organization itself. One way to do this without sacrificing the directness of the vision and mission statements is to include guiding principles as an addition to the statements. These can lay out the beliefs of the organization while keeping its vision and mission statements short and to the point.

Objectives

Once an organization has developed its mission statement, its next step is to develop the specific objectives that are focused on achieving that mission. Objectives refer to specific measurable results for the initiative's broad goals. An organization's objectives generally lay out how much of what will be accomplished by when. Objectives are measurable outcomes or results that indicate whether the organization is making progress toward accomplishing its mission. Objectives provide the basis for measuring performance against stated goals and providing feedback to its stakeholders.

The objectives should include both, quantitative measures and qualitative indicators. Quantitative measures are numbers such as number of new volunteers, percentage of donations used for specific purposes, and number of community events attended. Qualitative measures are things like increase awareness of breast cancer or reduce hospital readmissions.

For example, one of several objectives for a organization initiative to promote care and caring for older adults might be:

> By 2025 (by when), to increase by 20% (how much) those elders reporting that they are in daily contact with someone who cares about them (of what).

There are three basic types of objectives. They are:

1. Behavioral Objectives
2. Organization-Level Outcome Objectives, and
3. Process Objectives

It's important to understand that these different types of objectives aren't mutually exclusive. Most groups will develop objectives in all three categories.

Behavioral Objectives

These objectives look at changing the behaviors of people (what they are doing and saying) and the products (or results) of their behaviors. For example, a neighborhood improvement group might develop an objective around having an increased amount of home repair taking place (the behavior) or of improved housing (the result).

Organization-Level Outcome Objectives

These are related to behavioral outcome objectives, but are more focused more on a organization level instead of an individual level. For example, the same group might suggest increasing the percentage of decent affordable housing in the organization as a organization-level outcome objective.

Process Objectives

These are the objectives that refer to the implementation of activities necessary to achieve other objectives. For example, the group might adopt a comprehensive plan for improving neighborhood housing.

Examples of objectives include:

By December 2030, to increase by 30% parent engagement (i.e., talking, playing, reading) with children under 2 years of age. (Behavioral Objective) By 2025, to have made a 40% increase in youth graduating from high school. (Organization-Level Outcome Objective) By December of this year, implement the volunteer training program for all volunteers. (Process Objective)

Strategies

The next step in the process of VMOSA is developing your strategies. Strategies are the tactics you use to achieve your objectives. They include actions, policies, procedures, and resources. Strategies explain how the initiative will reach its objectives. Generally, organizations will have a wide variety of strategies that include people from all of the different parts, or sectors, of the organization. These strategies range from the very broad, which encompass people and resources from many different parts of the organization, to the very specific, which aim at carefully defined areas. Although an organization will have just one vision statement and one mission statement, it may have several strategies. The strategies can be different by country, by product segment, they can change over time to adjust to competition.

Examples of broad strategies include:

- A child health program might use social marketing to promote adult involvement with children
- An adolescent pregnancy initiative might decide to increase access to contraceptives in the organization
- An urban revitalization project might enhance the artistic life of the organization by encouraging artists to perform in the area
- To increase the number of volunteers, set up a committee to develop strategies for recruiting more volunteers or hold a special event to attract volunteers

Action Plans

Finally, an organization's action plan describes in great detail exactly how strategies will be implemented to accomplish the objectives developed earlier in this process. An action plan or implementation plan also describes the detailed actions necessary to achieve the

[intermediate] objectives, to whom they are assigned, the due dates and linkage if there are some dependencies, etc. Broadly, the action plans refer to:

1. Specific (organization and systems) changes to be sought, and
2. Specific action steps necessary to bring about changes in all of the relevant sectors, or parts, of the organization

Action steps are developed for each component of the changes sought. These include:

- Action step[s]: What will happen
- Person[s] responsible: Who will do what
- Date to be completed: Timing of each action step
- Resources required: Resources and support (both what is needed and what's available)
- Barriers or resistance, and a plan to overcome them
- Collaborators: Who else should know about this action

Values

Values are not listed in the VMOSA suite, but they are important as they drive and constraint behaviors during the journey to achieve the Goal. Values are the principles and moral beliefs by which the organization chooses to operate. Values influence the strategies, the ethics. Values mark the boundaries of the flight domain i.e., the fair game playground vs. the forbidden zone where the organizational ethics do not allow to play.

Case Study - King County

The six-year Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan represented a critical opportunity for King County to do ground-breaking work:

- Applying a theory of change that fundamentally shifts the county away from policies and practices that react to problems and crises toward investments that address the root causes of inequities, ultimately leading to better quality of life and greater prosperity in all of their communities.
- Balancing a bold vision with actionable and measurable objectives
- Allowing for innovation and adaptability across King County government to help

them be dynamic and culturally responsive, moving towards the goal of being racially justice internally and in the community

Their Equity and Social Justice strategies as One King County are to invest upstream and where needs are greatest, in employees and in community partnerships. And they will do this with accountable and transparent leadership.

Summary

Of course, once the organization finishes designing the strategic plan or VMOSA, it is just beginning in this work. The action plan should be iteratively tried, tested and revised, multiple times, if required. The organization should socialise the various aspects of VMOSA, solicit feedback from its stakeholders and then add or subtract elements of its plan based on that feedback.