



MAKE A STATEMENT



Tips and inspiration for writing your brand's mission, vision, and core values statements

BY NAREN ARULRAJAH

Brand identity is often associated with visual assets, such as a logo. However, it is more than that. It is the image and personality that your practice projects and how people view it. A branding strategy includes not only visuals but voice, writing style, and messaging. In fact, three of the most essential components are not visual at all. They are your mission, vision, and core values.

You will see core values along with mission and vision statements displayed predominantly in all sorts of materials and publications from big corporations. Small businesses, including many aesthetic practices, often skip this step. However, defining and documenting these concepts is more than a formality. They can become valuable tools for both marketing and practice management.

Adding these statements to your website allows you to help potential patients understand who you are. Including them in employee manuals helps your staff more accurately represent and reflect your brand. Furthermore, establishing and refining these concepts can help guide you in business decisions.

MISSION VS. VISION STATEMENT: CLEARING UP THE CONFUSION

One of the most common branding mistakes is confusing mission and vision statements. This is understandable because, at first glance, the two appear very similar, even interchangeable. Both are short, concise statements that relate to your practice's goals and purposes. However, that is where the similarities end.

- Your mission statement should describe what your brand is doing

or setting out to do. It relates to your brand's purposes in a very real and actionable way.

- By contrast, a vision statement generally describes long-term, loftier goals. It describes an idealistic outcome, sometimes even beyond the realm of likely or possible.

If you find it difficult to differentiate between them, just think of how we use these words in everyday life. A student might be on a mission to become a dermatologist; a community group might make it their mission to keep the town litter-free. These statements describe what the people are doing, and the word mission implies they are particularly passionate. What is fueling that passion? Perhaps the student envisions themselves helping others feel happy, healthy, and confident. Maybe the community leader is a visionary who wants to spread the idea and believes we can create a cleaner world, one community at a time.

VALUES: DEFINE WHAT MATTERS MOST

The final element of your essential branding trio is a bit easier to differentiate. Core values are not about goals or even what your practice does. Instead, they describe your brand's guiding principles and beliefs. Just as individuals have their own personal

and ethical standards by which they live, brands should have core values by which they operate.

Beyond the meaning, value statements differ from mission and vision in another way. They tend to be longer and more detailed. Mission and vision statements are generally short (or even incomplete) sentences, and you will often see values written out in a bulleted format.

PUT IT ALL TOGETHER

Why are mission, vision, and values so often discussed together? The mission gives purpose, the vision gives meaning, and core values give parameters. In combination, they answer three of the most important questions in your brand's story:

- What? The mission statement encompasses what your practice does.
- Why? The vision statement answers why it matters.
- How? Core values guide how you operate.

TIPS FOR WRITING YOUR STATEMENTS

Knowing what your practice does, why it exists, what it stands for, and where it is going is one thing. Articulating those concepts clearly

“THE MISSION GIVES PURPOSE, THE VISION GIVES MEANING, AND CORE VALUES GIVE PARAMETERS.”

and concisely is quite another thing. Here are a few tips to help ensure your success:

- Keep it simple. Avoid filler, buzz words, and flowery language. No matter how short or long a statement is, make every word count.
- Evoke emotion. We are talking about big ideas, essential guiding principles, and purpose.
- Think ahead. These statements aren't about where you are at right now or short-term goals. They should still be relevant months or years in the future.
- Get inspired. If you are “stuck,” try reviewing the mission, vision, and values of your favorite brands.

In many ways, brand identity describes who your business would be if it were a person. Using that analogy, we can think of the travel plan for

your brand's life journey. The mission is the mode of transportation, the vision describes the destination, and the values are the road rules that you follow along the way. ■

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■ President and CEO of Ekwa Marketing, has been a leader in medical marketing for over a decade. Ekwa provides comprehensive marketing solutions for busy doctors, with a team of more than 180 full-time professionals, providing web design, hosting, content creation, social media, reputation management, SEO, and more. If you're looking for ways to boost your marketing results, call 855-598-3320 for a free strategy session with Naren. You may also schedule a session at your convenience with the Senior Director of Marketing – Lila, by clicking www.ekwa.com/msm/ or simply send a text to 313-777-8494.