



Setting the Compass:

MISSION STATEMENT, PHILOSOPHY,
PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES, GOALS, STANDARDS

SETTING THE COMPASS: PHILOSOPHY, MISSION, GOAL, OBJECTIVES, PURPOSE

GOALS

1. Utilize a process for acquiring group information that will lead to establishing an effective organizational compass.
2. Utilize effective ways to write a mission statement, philosophy, purpose, objectives, and goals.

KEY WORDS FOR APPLICATION

1. Philosophy
2. Mission
3. Goal
4. Objectives
5. Purpose
6. Leadership
7. Principle(s)
8. Standard(s)
9. Entropy
10. Congruence
11. RUMBAS Criteria

Similar to a road map and compass, there are established ways to lead an organization/facility/business to success. Once that direction, principles, or standards are established, known, and shared with others, it will show the way to reach an ultimate goal—an ultimate end-point. The criteria of principles (RUMBAS) for determining the facility/organization success are:

REASONABLE PRINCIPLES

UNDERSTANDABLE PRINCIPLES

MEASUREABLE PRINCIPLES

BEHAVIORAL PRINCIPLES

ATTAINABLE PRINCIPLES

SPECIFIC PRINCIPLES

If the above criteria are met by the established principles of a facility/organization, we say that the principles or standards “*do the rumbas.*”

PRINCIPLES/STANDARDS RELATED TO SETTING THE COMPASS

One of the first administrative endeavors of a facility/organization is to determine written statements (standards or principles) that represent a philosophy, mission, goal, objectives, and purpose. These clarifying written statements are an outcome of the RUMBAS criteria that provide the following:

1. Baseline of understanding
2. Compass toward determining organizational goals
3. Moral and ethical position
4. Incorporation of values
5. Inspiration for good

DEFINITIONS

A philosophy is a personal statement of beliefs, standards, and principles that are used as the basis for practice. It is what a person believes related to conduct and performance. It should be one of the first considerations when determining the existence of a facility/organization, individuals to be on a board, decision-making committee, or an employee.

A mission is a strongly felt ambition or calling related to a facility /organization.

A goal is a desired terminal end point for all administrative beliefs, standards, and principles.

Objectives are the incremental beliefs, standards, and principles that will ultimately lead to a goal.

A purpose is an intentional aim or reason for something that is to be done. This statement is often repeated in the mission statement and/or the philosophy of the organization if clarity and emphasis is needed.

FURTHER CLARIFICATION AND DIFFERENTIATION BETWEEN OBJECTIVES AND GOALS

Although the term “objectives” are often used in the same context as the term “goal(s)”, there is a difference. Objectives (most often plural and called “process objectives”) are related to process and incremental in nature; whereas, goal(s) are related to final outcomes and terminal in nature.

Process Objectives---

Objectives are to *incrementally* move a facility/organization toward an end (terminal) goal. (Remember: The term “goal” as a process is inaccurate in this case, as a goal is considered to a terminal/end point.)

The process *objective* statement usually starts with the word “during.” Note that process objectives meet the RUMBAS criteria: Reasonable, Understandable, Measureable, Behavioral, Attainable, and Specific.

Examples

During the next five days the director will conduct at least one in-service demonstration per shift and per day on the updated use of the newly purchased copy machine and fax machine.

During each shift, all nurses taking patient vital signs will document immediately the vital signs result(s) on the computer vital signs documentation form.

Goal(s)---

A goal(s) is/are stated *terminal/end* behavior(s) that culminate in the attainment of incremental objectives. (Remember: The term “objective” is inaccurate in this case, as objectives are considered to be an incremental process.) A goal(s) is/are commonly called either “goal(s)” or “terminal goal(s).” Terminal goal(s) usually start with the words, “At the end of” (giving a terminal time frame) representing an end expectation. The terminal goal(s) meet the RUMBAS criteria: Reasonable, Understandable, Measureable, Behavioral, Attainable, and Specific.

Examples

At the end of the first month, Ms. Smith will be able to complete without error the required pharmacy acquisition form.

At the end of the year, the hospital will have successfully met their goal of hiring at least 10 new nursing graduates.

THE GROUP PROCESS (The Working Phase)

Provide the potential employee with a documented copy of the facility’s/organization’s standards/principles.

At the interview, ask the potential employees how they feel their personal and professional objectives and goals support the presented philosophy, mission statement, goal, objectives, and purpose statement of the facility/organization. This helps to determine the employee’s commitment and willingness to uphold the existing facility/organization’s principles.

To promote understanding of the current facility/organization’s principles---

There are times when the Pledge of Allegiance is said at some meetings—this is no different. Try selecting selected standards or principles as an opening statement of a meeting to set the mood and direction of the meeting.

The following basic questions regarding the facility’s/organization’s standards and principles might be considered or discussed by the group at specific meetings. These questions could be given in writing to employees before a group meeting or talked about during a group meeting.

The questions to be presented to the group members could include:

1. What do you/we believe is the reason and basis for the existence of this facility/organization?
2. Why do you/we think the facility/organization exists?
3. What do we intend to accomplish ultimately?
4. What are some important factors, processes, and behaviors that will help us reach our goal?
5. Who are the people (by description or needs) we serve?

6. What circumstance(s) exist to cause an intervention by the facility/organization?
7. What is the extent of your/our commit to meet objectives in order to reach the goal(s)?
8. What level/quality of service do you/we provide?
9. How is your service different from other similar facilities/organizations?
10. How is your/our success measured?

It is, also, helpful for the group leader before or during a selected group meeting to require each group member to independently write down *their personal* understanding and contribution to each of the presented standards/principles as it relates to the facility/organization.

Such activities related to current standards/principles will encourage recall and commitment to help reduce the universal uncontrollable entropy (ever- changing effect of everything in the universe). It, then, becomes important for the group leader to reiterate verbally (and perhaps in writing) the facility's/organizations interpretation of these principles that (at this time) form the basis of the facility/organization.

The shared philosophy, mission statement, goal, objectives, and purpose statement, requires group solidarity and a willingness to work together toward clarity and conciseness in understanding these principles. The words related to the facility/organizational principles should be exciting and attention-seeking to the reader. The statements should represent the energy and enthusiasm of the employees of the facility/organization.

To determine/develop a facility's/organization's new principles---

If you have a meeting *without* encouraging an independent process of determination or development of a philosophy, mission statement, goal, objectives, or purpose statement, there is a tendency for group members to accept the beliefs and principles known and/or used currently or perhaps what has gleaned from comments/hearsay in the (so-called) neighborhood. So, let us set the record straight in writing what the facility/organization is all about!

Leadership requires an encouragement or a written input and phrasing of words for a new or improved facility/organization. This is an exciting leadership endeavor. It is not a short process to affirm such principles. The process requires time to select the exact choice of words, time to contemplate the meaning of each phrase, and a return to a group setting to make a final group decision. The entire process might be frustrating and time-consuming, but it is necessary and ultimately well worth group effort.

After each group member individually writes their understanding of these principles (philosophy, mission statement, goal, objectives, and purpose statement) in preparation of an upcoming group meeting or during a group meeting, a discussion about their written contributions should ensue. It is the responsibility of the group leader to clarify (perhaps on a black/white board) the agreed-upon wording of each standard/principle, place in print/writing of each term and definitions, and distribute the agreed-upon definitions for further consideration for a few days. Then, have a review at the next group meeting for possible changes in any of the principles. Following a final group consensus, try for a voted approval. Record in the minutes the approved definition of each principle and the fact that group consensus occurred.

To reaffirm **continued understanding** of group decisions regarding a facility's/organization's principles---

The previously described group determination effort to define a written philosophy, mission statement, goal, objectives, and purpose statement should be, thereafter, known and emulated in practice by this group. The future success of the group's adaptation and emulation of these principles is in the group's identification and acceptance process, as stated above. Without frequent reviews and reminders of these principles, entropy WILL OCCUR! True leadership of a group(s) means that the leader will find consistent ongoing ways to remind each employee (individually or as a group) of their commitment to these principles.

CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS:

1. If I am asked as a leader to state the philosophy, mission, goal, objectives, purpose, of the organization in which I am employed, could I state each principle with confidence and accuracy? Select one principle and state the content of the principle.
2. What have I done as a leader to promote the understanding and compliance of employee behaviors that emulate the philosophy, mission, goal, objectives, and purpose of the facility/organization in which I am employed?
3. What behavior(s) have I exhibited as an employee that show(s) I know and emulate the philosophy, mission, goal, objectives, and purpose of the facility/organization?
4. What do you see and experience in your work day at the facility/organization that tells you the philosophy, mission, goal, objectives, and purpose are known and upheld in the service(s) rendered?
5. What would you do if you recognized an obvious infraction in employee behavior that does not support the philosophy, mission, goal, objectives, or purpose, of the facility/organization?

SUGGESTED READING:

Entropy by this author