

the  
**PROUTY  
PROJECT**

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**"C" NOTE QUOTE:**

"There are a lot of guys who say they want to work harder and be the best, but they never pay the price. I love paying the price."



Shannon knew that Bob Kierlin, Chairman of the Board, Fastenal Company, said the following:  
*"Just believe in people, give them a chance to make decisions, take risks and work hard. We could have made this work selling cabbages."*

Shannon plans to give the gift certificate to her folks. She says, "I think when luck comes your way you should pass it on." Congratulations Shannon!

● If you know who said this quote, please call 952.942.2922 or send an e-mail to [kari.baltzer@proutyproject.com](mailto:kari.baltzer@proutyproject.com) with your answer before Wednesday, April 30 – one guess per individual. If we have more than one correct answer, we throw those names in a hat to draw the winner of a \$100 gift certificate.

**And Last Issue's Winner is...  
Shannon Fischer, Independent Consultant,  
Plymouth, MN**

## My Name is Jeff Prouty and I Approve This Message

A special welcome to Jayna Wallace (University of Minnesota, 2007 graduate in Public Relations and Business Management) and Beth Peterson (University of Minnesota, Carlson School of Management, 2007 graduate in Entrepreneurial Management and Marketing). They'll be joining our "mission control" team, making sure all the "astronauts" are traveling successfully and safely.

A **must read:** *Strategy and the Fat Smoker; Doing What's Obvious But Not Easy*, by David Maister. Laced with edgy insights and action items, you'll particularly enjoy Chapter 18, "The Chief Executive's Speech."

If you're working on your tax return now, please take a few minutes to read this newsletter. Enjoy, it will be a nice break. And a special **"thanks again"** to all the "referral recognition" folks noted on page four.

Keep stretching in Q2,

Jeff Prouty

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## ● STRATEGIC PLANNING

# DOES YOUR MISSION STATEMENT PASS THE TEST?



[mike.felmlee@proutyproject.com](mailto:mike.felmlee@proutyproject.com)

Article by  
Mike Felmlee

This is the second of a three-part series of articles about your organization's vision, mission, and value statements. In January, I shared our philosophy around vision statements using a framework developed by Jim Collins and Jerry Porras entitled, "Building Your Company's Vision." Today, I will share our thinking about mission statements.

If you recall, we have the following quote in our *Creative Think Tank*:

“Definition of a mission statement: long, awkward sentence that reflects management's inability to think clearly.”

— Dilbert

This Dilbert quote always gets a chuckle from our clients yet it highlights the challenge we all face in describing the essence of the organizations we serve. Why is it so difficult? We'll explore this in the context of the following three questions:

- 1 Why is your mission so important?
- 2 How does your mission differ from your vision statement?
- 3 How do you know when you have created a really good mission statement?

### Why is your mission so important?

A really solid mission statement clearly states the reason why you exist and reflects your purpose and cause. It also provides direction and will last the test of time. Can you imagine sailing without a rudder? You would have a difficult time getting to where you want to sail without it. Organizations use their missions in much the same way. It grounds an organization and helps you make strategic decisions as you navigate towards your vision. Without it, you're rudderless in a sea full of unfocused possibilities.

### How does your mission differ from your vision statement?

We get asked this question all the time. Unfortunately, the distinction between the two is blurred as they're often used interchangeably. However, our research suggests there is a difference. A mission statement focuses on a company's present state; while a vision statement focuses on a company's future. Pick up any annual report and ask the following questions:

- Does the mission statement state why the organization exists and reflect the purpose and cause of the organization?
- Or, does it look more like a vision statement reflecting what the organization aspires to achieve (sometimes expressed as a Big Hairy Audacious Goal)?

At this point, you may be thinking, so what! What's the harm if we get our mission and vision statements confused?

Some believe if you spend more than ten minutes trying to distinguish between the two you've probably spent five minutes too long. We believe this too.

However, articulating why you exist and where you aspire to take the organization are both critical elements of your organization's story. Missing one or the other limits your story and its impact. In fact, the more compelling the story, the easier it is for you as a leader to motivate your colleagues to go beyond where they thought possible. It also helps communicate your story to your shareholders and other key stakeholders.

### How do you know when you have created a really good mission statement?

You'll know you have created a really good mission statement when it's clear, it's compelling, and an 8<sup>th</sup> grade student is able to understand it.

I've always admired the mission and vision statements of the world-famous Mayo Clinic:

**Mission:** Mayo Clinic will provide the best care to every patient every day through integrated clinical practice, education, and research.

**Vision:** Mayo Clinic will be the premier patient-centered academic medical organization.

Here is your mission statement challenge. Rate the following five questions (each worth a maximum of five points) to test your current mission and determine if it adds wind to your company's sails:

Description	Rating Scale (1=low, 5=high)
1. Is it clear and compelling?	_____
2. Does it state why your company exists?	_____
3. Does it reflect the company's purpose and cause?	_____
4. Does it focus on your company's present state?	_____
5. Does it pass the test of time?	_____
Total (maximum 25 points)	_____
Please let us know how you scored.	

Best of luck to each of you as you create even better mission and vision statements for your organizations.

In our next issue we will discuss how value statements interact with your mission and vision statements.

Keep Sailing!

## ● STRETCH EXPEDITION 2008

# MICROFINANCING, POVERTY, AND KIDS IN INDIA

[grayce.belvedere.young@proutyproject.com](mailto:grayce.belvedere.young@proutyproject.com)



Article by  
Grayce Belvedere Young

As many of you are aware, the Prouty Project team engages in an annual STRETCH Expedition to stretch ourselves physically, emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually. We went to India this year to learn about microfinancing and work with an orphanage and school in Chennai (southeast side of India). We played with the children, taught English grammar, painted an entire school building inside and out, and did minor carpentry work.

The experience was filled with adjectives and dichotomies – exhilarating, exhausting, depressing, hopeful, bright smiles, deep wrinkles, colorful saris, and drab buildings. We all benefited from the incredible hospitality of our Indian hosts and learned about ourselves and India in the process. Following is an excerpt from my journal in an attempt to capture the sounds, smells, flavors, touches, and sights of our experiences.

### India: The Senses

India plays on all of the senses all at the same time.

The endless honking horns of vehicles have many meanings in India. They are the equivalent of turn indicators, flashing your bright lights, waving hand and finger signals, swearing at other drivers, evil eyes, and all other means of communicating to other drivers.

- “I’m turning left.”
- “I’m turning right.”
- “Move over!”
- “Watch out!”
- “I’m coming up fast behind you.”
- “Get out of my way.”
- “Slow poke.”
- “You cut me off!”
- “I was here first.”

The honking sinks into your ears and consciousness in an unsettling way while the challenge for all drivers is to determine what the cacophony of honking actually means.

The smells of India waft through the dusty, hot air. Burning wood produces the smoky smell of a campfire mixed with plastic marshmallow bags, the smoldering soggy graham cracker box, and the leftovers from the evening meal. The next breeze carries the sweet pungent smell of cooking curry and our taste buds respond as we breathe in deeply.



A wobbly, green city bus overstuffed with people ambles by and the bus leaves a cloud of gun metal diesel penetrating your nose. A few steps further and an emancipated bull with bell strung horns painted red and blue swats his stringy tail and up flies a strong barnyard smell. As the grungy bull forages through his lunch pile, your nose wrinkles with the foul stench of roasted-in-the-sun garbage. Leaving the street behind and opening my hotel room door, memories of the moth-filled trunk in my great aunt Ad’s attic greet me through the rush of air conditioning.

Dinner’s enticing smell of curry welcomes you to savor the plethora of tastes. The first dish is forest green with peas that awaken your taste buds and leave you looking greedily for more. The second dish is brownish red with a radiating heat that encourages you to bite deeply into the soft folds of the lovely nut and fruit bread. The prawns swim in the masala dish and you bite firmly into the pink fish. The chicken dish surprises you with a different curry flavor that is both spicy and bold, yet subtle. Concluding the meal are the crunchy, nut-green anise seeds that burst freshness into your mouth, leaving it clean and alive.

Their dainty, brown, soft hands reach enthusiastically for yours as they offer in sing-song English, “Hello! How are you? I am fine!” The mite size hands haven’t yet learned to squeeze back and they just hold warmly onto yours as long as you do. Later as you are reading stories, you notice a gentle swaying in their fragile bodies as they delicately lean on your arms and legs, pressing to see the pictures in the books.

When the kids tire of your voice, try as you might to inject exclamatory notes to match the story, your sturdy hands grip the thick hewn rope to pull with all your might. You feel the rope scratching through your palms as the other team of kids yank you across the line in much heralded defeat. Gazing back at you are the whitest, brightest smiles of 30 laughing children. Their enthusiastic jumping and cheering blurs your vision and fills your heart with laughter. Try as they might, your comrades gleefully snap photos attempting to record the memory for others to later enjoy.

Waving goodbye, the young women’s saris of blues, greens, oranges, and reds contrast sharply with the sand-filled yard. The sea of colors, thick black braids, and shy gentle eyes peer at you with interest. Women on their own. And I wonder if they wish to experience another country and culture through their own thoughtful gaze. What would imprint on their senses?

## REFERRAL RECOGNITION

A very special **THANKS** to the following individuals who introduced us to new clients in 2007! We always appreciate our clients and friends sending us new business referrals.

We put each person's name in a hat, and drew Brigid Bonner's name, as the winner of a \$1,000 donation to the charity of her choice.



Cino Adelson



Mike Frommelt,  
KeyStone Search



Dan Haag, M.A.  
Mortenson  
Company



Marilee Hedberg,  
Scholarship America



Chuck Hoge,  
Otter Tail  
Corporation



Liz Jordan,  
Oak Ridge Hotel &  
Conference Center



Al Kaufmann,  
Silverman Olson  
Thorvilson &  
Kaufmann



Brian Knudsvig,  
Art Partners Group



Carin Martens,  
Oak Ridge Hotel &  
Conference Center



Randy Morgan,  
Christensen Group



Jim Newman,  
Hrizons



Ann Ruff,  
CommonBond  
Communities



Susan Sands,  
S&B Properties



Dave Sprague,  
The Sprague Group



Todd Urness,  
Winthrop &  
Weinstine



Darlene Wilde,  
Oak Ridge Hotel &  
Conference Center

(no photo available):

Mickey Bailey, Bowman and Brooke • Daniel Berndt, Dunlap & Seeger, P.A. • Brigid Bonner  
• Bruce Christensen, Christensen Group • Beth Gunderson, General Mills •  
Elizabeth Kautz, City of Burnsville • Brian Rotty, Mayo Clinic • Joy Svoboda

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**THANKS!**