**CHAPTER FOUR  
Clarifying Organizational Mandates and Mission**

*Three outstanding attitudes—obliviousness to the growing disaffection of constituents, primacy of self-aggrandizement, and the illusion of invulnerable status—are persistent aspects of folly.*

—Barbara Tuchman, *The March of Folly*

This chapter covers Steps 2 and 3 of the Strategy Change Cycle, identifying mandates and clarifying mission and values. Together, mandates, mission, and values indicate broadly the *public value* the organization will create and provide the social justification and legitimacy on which the organization's existence depends.

Public and nonprofit organizations are *externally justified*. This means that they are chartered by the state to pursue certain public purposes (Rainey, 2014) and their legitimacy is conferred by the broader society (Suddaby, Bitektine, & Haack, 2017). These organizations must find ways to show that their operations do indeed create public value or they risk losing the social justification for their existence, their legitimacy, and any tax-exempt status they have.

Democratic governments can create public value through a number of overlapping activities, some of which are more appropriate to one level or type of government than another (Bozeman & Johnson, 2015; Bryson, Crosby & Bloomberg, 2015a, 2015b; Moore, 2013; Weimer & Vining, 2010). These activities include:

* Providing a constitutional framework of laws and supporting the rule of law—not least by the government itself
* Creating an open, transparent government
* Fostering and relying on the democratic process, including making sure that mechanisms for articulating and aggregating values function in a democratic way
* Protecting civil and human rights, human dignity, and the core of subsistence; and beyond that, providing ways to ensure social mobility and progressive opportunity
* Ensuring that a long-term, holistic view is taken and that stewardship of the public interest and the common good are seen as crucial functions of government, albeit shared with other actors and usually subject to contest
* Inspiring and mobilizing the government itself and other key entities and actors to undertake individual and collective action in pursuit of the common good (Crosby & Bryson, 2005), as well as catalyzing *active* citizenship in which diverse groups of citizens create programs, projects, products, or services of lasting public value (Boyte, 2004)
* Maintaining a stable economy with reasonable levels of growth, unemployment, inflation, debt, savings, investment, and balance of payment figures
* Relying on markets when they can be expected to work, including correcting market imperfections and freeing, facilitating, and stimulating markets, and not relying on markets when they cannot be expected to work (Weimer & Vining, 2010). Serving this purpose might include:
  + Providing needed public goods that private markets will not provide on their own or else will provide badly (for example, defense, large infrastructure projects, common spaces, free parks) and ensuring that the benefits of publicly provided goods and services are not inappropriately captured by some subset of the population for whom they are not solely intended (for example, unnecessarily restricting public access to public lands)
  + Subsidizing activities with positive spillover effects for the general public (for example, K–12 and higher education, basic research, certain economic development activities, block clubs)
  + Taxing or regulating activities with actual or potential negative spillover effects for the general public (for example, commercial and investment banking, food and drug production and distribution, building construction, automobile operation)
  + Addressing problems created by asymmetries in information availability, distribution, or use (for example, licensing or certification programs, product labeling requirements)
  + Addressing problems of loss and uncertainty (for example, governmentally organized or subsidized insurance schemes, the Strategic Petroleum Reserve)
  + Making sure that conservation of resources is emphasized rather than assuming substitutable resources will be found or invented (for example, conserving oil and fossil fuels)
  + Protecting a common heritage when it otherwise might be lost (for example, historic and architectural preservation programs, protecting areas of outstanding natural beauty, memorials to outstanding public service)
* Providing public goods and services in a cost-effective way (for example, transportation infrastructure and systems, health and social services, police and criminal justice services). This often means engaging in cocreation and coproduction with citizens and others (Voorberg, Bekkers, & Tummers, 2015) and cross-sector collaboration (Bryson, Crosby, & Stone, 2015; Kettl, 2015a, 2015c)
* Using information, scientific research, and a variety of public value-oriented analyses that are as objective as possible to inform public decisions (Moore, 2013)
* Making use of civic-minded public servants and professional expertise (Frederickson, 1997)

Nonprofit organizations in the United States can create public value by a number of means. The array of types of nonprofit organizations and their specific purposes is extraordinary. Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Service code contains the largest number of tax-exempt organizations. They are granted tax concessions because they are presumed to create public value when they:

* Express the First Amendment right of assembly
* Promote public welfare directly rather than privately, as in the case of firms, or of a definable subgroup, as in the case of associations
* Promote public welfare in a manner that goes beyond government, as in the case of religion, or in a way that substitutes for government, as in the cases of housing and health
* Serve public purposes at a cost less than government would incur and, therefore, create tax savings
* Serve public purposes in a charitable way so that public or community welfare rather than individual welfare is served (Bryce, 1999, pp. 32, 40)

There are three tests that an organization must pass to be granted 501(c)(3) status (Bryce, 1999, pp. 40–41, 49–50; see also Hopkins and Gross, 2016). The *organizational test* requires that the nonprofit be organized to improve public welfare, rather than to benefit individuals or owners, by pursuing one or more of eight specific purposes: educational, religious, charitable, scientific, literary, testing for public safety, fostering certain national or international sports competitions, or preventing cruelty to children or to animals. The *political test* requires that the organization's charter forbid the nonprofit from participating in any political campaign on behalf of a candidate. And the *asset test* requires that the charter prohibit any distribution of assets or income to benefit individuals as owners or managers, except for fair compensation of services rendered, and must forbid the use of the organization for the personal benefit of founders, supporters, managers, their relatives, or associates.

Nonprofit organizations also can fail in a variety of ways; thus, public value can be created by working to avoid the failures. Salamon (1995, pp. 44–48) identifies four categories of voluntary failure:

1. *Philanthropic insufficiency* or the sector's “inability to generate resources on a scale that is both adequate enough and reliable enough to cope with the human service problems of an advanced industrial society” (p. 45)
2. *Philanthropic particularism*, which refers to “the tendency of voluntary organizations and their benefactors to focus on particular subgroups of the population….As a result, serious gaps can occur in the coverage of subgroups by the existing voluntary organizations” (pp. 45–46)
3. *Philanthropic paternalism*, in which the “nature of the sector comes to be shaped by the preferences not of the community as a whole, but of its wealthy members” (p. 47)
4. *Philanthropic amateurism*, in which care that requires professional training and expertise is “entrusted to well-meaning amateurs” (p. 48)

Communities can create public value by promoting a sense of individual and collective identity, belonging, recognition, and security; by providing people a place to live, work, learn, enjoy, and express themselves; by building and maintaining physical, human, intellectual, social, and cultural capital of various sorts; and by fostering a civically engaged, egalitarian, trusting, and tolerant democratic society. Social capital in particular has been shown to have a broad range of positive effects on health, education, welfare, safety, and civic activism (Putnam, Feldstein, & Cohen, 2004). Communities are necessary for our existence as human beings, and serving communities provides a justification for our existence as humans (see, for example, Block, 2009; McKnight & Block, 2010).

As public problems have increasingly been defined in such a way that they are beyond the competence of single organizations or sectors to solve, collaboration has been looked to as a way to pool competence to mount an effective response. Cross-sector collaboration specifically is seen as a way to systematically harness each sector's unique strengths, while minimizing or overcoming its characteristic weaknesses, to ensure the joint response to challenges is competent to successfully do the job at hand (Bryson et al., 2015; Bryson, Crosby, & Bloomberg, 2015a, 2015b).

**MANDATES**

Although Step 2 (clarifying organizational mandates) is usually less time consuming than Step 3 (clarifying mission), it is no less important. Before an organization can define its mission and values, it should know exactly what it is formally and informally *required* to do (and not do) by external authorities. Formal requirements are likely to be codified in laws, regulations, ordinances, articles of incorporation, charters, and so forth, and therefore may be easier to uncover and clarify than the organization's mission.

In addition, organizations typically must meet a variety of informal mandates that may be embodied in norms or the expectations of key stakeholders, such as the electorate or duly elected representatives. These informal mandates may be no less binding. For example, newly elected officials often talk about the “mandate” they have received from voters—and if the mandate is real and strong, woe unto those who ignore it. Real clarity, however, about these informal mandates may have to await a stakeholder analysis, discussed in a subsequent section.

**Purpose and Immediate Desired Outcomes**

The purpose of Step 2 is to identify and clarify the nature and meaning of the externally imposed mandates, both formal and informal, affecting the organization. Four outcomes should be sought from this step:

1. Identification of the organization's formal and informal mandates, including who is mandating what and with what force
2. Interpretation of what is required as a result of the mandates (leading perhaps to explicit goals or performance indicators)
3. Clarification of what is forbidden by the mandates (which also might lead to explicit goals or performance indicators)
4. Clarification of what is not ruled out by the mandates (that is, the rough boundaries of the unconstrained field of action)

It is very important to clarify what is explicitly required, explicitly forbidden, and not explicitly ruled out. Attending to the first two can alert organizational members to what they *must* or *must not* do, the key elements of what Simons (1995, p. 6) defines as an organization's “boundary system” meant to set limits on behavior tied to defined sanctions and credible threat of punishment. In a time of constrained resources and competing demands, choices no doubt must be made about which mandates to emphasize and which to downplay or try to change, but doing either is not without risk.

By considering what the organization *might* or *should* do, organizational members and other key stakeholders can engage in valuable discussions about which mandates are useful in that they allow for the responsible exercise of discretion (Hill & Hupe, 2014) and “allow desirable creativity within defined limits of freedom” (Simons, 1995, p. 178); which mandates may need to be changed; and what the organization's mission ought to be. Too many organizations think they are more constrained than they actually are and, indeed, make the fundamental error of assuming that their mandates and mission are the same. This might be the case, but leaders and planners should not start out with that assumption.

**Desired Longer-Term Outcomes and Process Design and Action Guidelines**

There are two potential longer-term desired outcomes of Step 2. First, clarity about what is mandated—what must be done and not done—will increase the likelihood that mandates will actually be met and public value created (Nelson & French, 2002; Rosenbloom, 2007, 2015). Research on goal setting indicates that one of the most important determinants of goal achievement is the clarity of the goals themselves. The more specific the goal, the more likely it will be achieved (Chun & Rainey, 2005; Jung, 2014; Latham, Borgogni, & Petitta, 2008). Second, the possibility of developing a mission that is not limited to mandates is enhanced. It helps people examine the *potential* purposes of organizational action for creating public value if they know what is not explicitly forbidden.

The process guidelines for this step are straightforward:

1. *Have someone compile the formal and informal mandates faced by the organization*. A straightforward summary in plain English should be produced. If the organization is governmental in nature, it is important not to forget the democratic-constitutional values that legislatures and the courts have been trying to enforce for decades, such as representation, participation, transparency, and individual rights (Hill & Lynn, 2009; Rosenbloom, 2007).
2. *Review the mandates in order to clarify what is required, what is forbidden, and what is allowed*. Part of this exercise may include gaining clarity about who is mandating what and with what force. This can provide a major clarification of organizational goals or performance indicators. These goals can then be used, along with goals that might be derived from stakeholder analyses and the mission statement, to identify issues.
3. *Regularly remind organizational members what the organization is required to do, and forbidden to do, as a way of ensuring conformity with the mandates*. In other words, institutionalize attention to the mandates. Certainly strategic plans, annual reports, staff retreats, and orientation sessions for new employees should include a section (perhaps a very brief one) on mandates. Other methods might prove useful as well. Failure to do so can *diminish* public value and undermine legitimacy. For example, research on federal annual performance plans required by the Government Performance and Results Act has indicated a disturbing failure of those plans to attend to some important mandates, specifically requirements under the Freedom of Information Act. This leads one to wonder if other important mandated elements of creating public value are being ignored (Rosenbloom, 2007).
4. *Undertake a regular review of the mandates and discuss which seem to be current, which may need to be revised, and which should be dropped*. In a review of state-imposed mandates in Minnesota, local government respondents saw a need for dialogue with the state to ensure mandates are reasonable, flexible, adequately funded, and less burdensome in terms of their cumulative impact (Grossback, 2002).

**MISSION**

Yogi Berra, the famous New York Yankees baseball player and manager, once said, “You've got to be very careful if you don't know where you're going, because you might not get there.” His maxim emphasizes that without a sense of purpose, we are quite literally lost. Mission provides that sense of purpose.

It can be very helpful (though not always necessary or possible) to expand an organization's mission into an early vision of success, which may then guide subsequent efforts at issue identification and strategy development (see [Figure 2.1](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781119071617/epub/OPS/c02.xhtml#c02-fig-0001)). Without a vision of success, organizational members may not know enough about or see enough how to fulfill the mission.

Communities, in particular, may find it useful to develop a guiding vision that embodies important purposes and values. They are unlikely to have a mission statement as such, but a guiding vision can provide the sense of purpose, values, and common ground that enables disparate and essentially independent groups and organizations to strive together for the common good (Walzer & Hamm, 2012).

**Exhibit 4.1. The Vision, Mission, and Values of the Metropolitan Economic Development Association, 2011–2015 and 2016–2020.**

**2011–2015**

Vision: Thriving communities through equal economic participation

Mission: Helping minority entrepreneurs SUCCEED. And communities GROW.

Values: Excellence, customer focus, integrity, respect

*Source:* MEDA 2011–2015 Strategic Plan.

**2016–2020**

Vision: Thriving communities through equal economic participation

Mission: Helping minority entrepreneurs SUCCEED

Values: Excellence, customer focus, integrity, respect

*Source:* MEDA 2016–2020 Strategic Plan.

Mission, in other words, clarifies an organization's purpose or *why* it should be doing what it does; vision clarifies *what* the organization should look like and *how* it should behave in fulfilling its mission. [Chapter 8](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781119071617/epub/OPS/c08.xhtml) discusses constructing a vision of success; for now, it is enough to note simply that the foundation of any good vision of success is an organization's mission statement or a community's statement of purpose and values.

[Exhibits 4.1](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781119071617/epub/OPS/c04.xhtml?create=true#c04-fea-0001) and [4.2](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781119071617/epub/OPS/c04.xhtml?create=true#c04-fea-0002) present the mission and vision statements respectively of the Metropolitan Economic Development Association (MEDA) and the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI). Note that the mission of MEDA changed in a significant way in the current 2016–2020 strategic plan. The new statement drops the sentence “And communities GROW.” The change resulted from a decision to sharpen the organization's focus on helping minority entrepreneurs and businesses. Minneapolis's mission and vision statements will be found in [Exhibit 7.1](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781119071617/epub/OPS/c07.xhtml#c07-fea-0001).

Note the contrast between Yogi Berra's maxim and J.R.R. Tolkien's observation in *The Fellowship of the Ring* (1965, p. 182), “Not all those who wander are lost.” Tolkien was speaking of people who may look like they are wandering but actually do have a clear sense of purpose. Purposeful wandering is quite different from the mindless wandering to which Yogi Berra alludes. Purposeful wandering also is what Daniel Boone is alluding to in the epigraph opening of [Chapter 2](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781119071617/epub/OPS/c02.xhtml).

The statement from Barbara Tuchman (1984) quoted as the epigraph of this chapter makes a different point: Any organization that becomes an end in itself is doomed to failure. Perhaps the preeminent example of such failure in the last half-century is the collapse of the former Soviet Union. Clearly, self-aggrandizement, illusions of invulnerability, and disregard for constituents' desires can lead to disaster for those leaders not paying attention to what people actually need and want. Indeed, most planning disasters probably meet Tuchman's criteria for folly (Hall, 1980; Nutt, 2002).

**Exhibit 4.2. International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions' Mission and Vision Statements, 2017–2022.**

**Mission**

INTOSAI is an autonomous, independent, professional, and nonpolitical organization established to provide mutual support; foster the exchange of ideas, knowledge, and experiences; act as a recognized voice of SAIs within the international community; provide high quality auditing standards for the public sector; promote good governance; and foster SAI capacity development and continuous performance improvement.

**Vision**

INTOSAI promotes good governance by enabling SAIs to help their respective governments improve performance, enhance transparency, ensure accountability, maintain credibility, fight corruption, promote public trust, and foster the efficient and effective receipt and use of public resources for the benefit of their citizens.

*Source:* INTOSAI 2017–2022 Strategic Plan.

**Purpose and Immediate Desired Outcomes**

Ultimately, strategic planning is about purpose, meaning, values, and virtue. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the clarification of mission and the subsequent development of a vision of success. The aim is to specify the purposes of the organization and the philosophy and values that guide it. Unless the purposes focus on socially useful and justifiable ends, and unless the philosophy and values are themselves virtuous, the organization cannot hope to command indefinitely the resources needed to survive, including high-quality, loyal, committed employees (Goodsell, 2010; Rainey, 2014).

Step 3 has two main immediate desired outcomes: a stakeholder analysis (if one has not been completed already) and a mission statement. The former provides useful information and valuable preparation for the latter. Agreement on the stakeholder analysis and mission statement by key decision makers should clarify the organization's arenas of action, many of the basic rules of the game within these arenas, the implicit if not explicit goals of the organization, and possible performance indicators.

In addition, the agreement on mission—particularly if it is consensual—will itself be a source of power for the organization that can have positive effects on performance (Pfeffer, 2010). Much of the power comes from framing and communicating the mission (often through measurable goals) in such a way that employees and other actors can commit to and identify with the organization and its mission (Moynihan, Pandey, & Wright, 2013). The mission in this case provides a deep source of meaning and motivation to those who pursue it (Wright, 2007). Finally, agreement on an organizational mission that embraces socially desirable and justified purposes should produce legitimacy internally and externally for the organization (Suddaby et al., 2017), as well as enthusiasm, and even excitement, among organizational members (Kouzes & Posner, 2017).

**Longer-Term Desired Outcomes**

A number of additional desirable outcomes flow from clarifying and agreeing on the organization's mission. Perhaps the most important is simply that agreement helps foster a habit of focusing deliberations on what is truly important. Too often, key decision makers in a public or nonprofit organization never come together to discuss cross-functional issues or, more important, the organization as a whole.

Even when they do—for example, at a staff meeting—most of their time is often taken up with announcements or discussion of relatively trivial matters. Although such discussions may serve to introduce key decision makers to one another and even provide some of the social glue necessary to hold any organization together, they are relatively useless and may be a colossal waste of everyone's time.

When important issues are not being addressed, it is important to know *why*. Participants simply may not know how to do so, particularly if serious conflicts might be involved, in which case targeted training might help. Or they may not be comfortable with one another—for example, they may be unsure of one another's motives—and therefore fearful of the consequences of raising difficult issues. Team building might be used to build trust and address these fears. Or avoiding real issues can be a way for senior decision makers to control the agenda and enhance their own power. In this last case, senior personnel might be persuaded of the benefits of more participatory decision making or else somehow be persuaded to leave. As Scharmer (2016, p. 415) observes, “The underlying principle here is that *energy follows attention* [italics in original]. This means that the biggest leverage we have is what we pay attention to and how we attend to a situation.” To be blunt: If you are not paying attention to what is important, what good are you as a leader or follower?

The second important longer-term desired outcome, of course, is the clarification of organizational (or community) purpose or its *strategic intent* (Ackermann & Eden, 2011). Depending on how this is done, the performance payoffs can be significant. For example, quantitative evidence from public schools in Michigan demonstrates that the existence of a mission statement that is focused and activist and that emphasizes a commitment to measurable achievement is linked to a measurable positive effect on students' math and reading achievements (Weiss & Piderit, 1999). Because defining the mission may be thought of as the central function of leadership, more effective leadership is yet another outcome (Goodsell, 2010).

Clarity of organizational purpose helps leaders in other ways as well. In particular, it helps articulate the purpose of organizational structures and systems, including the resource allocation system. Leaders will be helped to guide internal conflict so that it furthers organizational ends. Leaders are required to guide the play of the game within the structure of the rules, but they also need to change the rules on occasion. Clarity of purpose provides a valuable basis for guiding conflict productively and for understanding which rules help and which need to be changed (Schein, 2016).

A key point about managing conflict is that organizational conflicts typically are about something other than what is nominally in dispute. For that reason, their resolution requires the conflict to be reframed at a higher level of abstraction. Robert Terry (l993, 2001), for example, describes a hierarchy of human action. *Fulfillment* is at the top and is the embodiment of all that is underneath. Then comes *meaning*, or why people act; then *mission*, which guides one in a meaningful direction; then *power*; then *structures and systems*; then *resources*; and finally, the *givens* of existence. He argues that disputes at any level in this hierarchy are usually really about what is at the next level up. Thus, power struggles in general are usually about the purposes the power is to serve. Arguments about organizational structures and systems are really about who is empowered or disempowered by different designs. Disputes over resources are typically about how they should be regulated in structures and systems. Conflicts over givens are about what counts as a resource and what is to be discounted, devalued, or ignored. A focus on the purpose and ultimate meaning of organizational efforts—to the extent that there is agreement on them—therefore can frame most of these conflicts in such a way that they facilitate the pursuit and fulfillment of organizational ends.

Agreement on purpose can also help the parties in a conflict to disconnect ends from means and thus be clear about what goals are to be pursued, or problems to be addressed, prior to exploring solutions. The advantage of doing so is that most conflicts are about solutions; that is, there usually is no agreement or clear understanding about what problems the solutions are to meant to solve (Bryant, 2015; Nutt, 2002). Further, the organization cannot really know what problems it ought to address without some sense of the purpose it serves. Once an organization understands its purpose, it can define the problems it is meant to solve and can better understand how to choose among competing solutions. David Osborne and Ted Gaebler based their best-selling book *Reinventing Government: How the Entrepreneurial Spirit Is Transforming the Public Sector* (1992) in part on this very point: If governments stick to *steering*—as noted in [Chapter 1](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781119071617/epub/OPS/c01.xhtml), the word *government* comes from the Latin for steering, which means focusing on purpose (and problem definition)—then they are less likely to be a captive of any one approach to *rowing* (i.e., solutions) (see also Hill & Hupe, 2014; Osborne & Hutchinson, 2004).

Agreement on purpose, therefore, gets the organization to pursue what is often a normatively preferable sequence of conflict resolution activities: to agree on purposes, identify problems or issues, and then explore and agree on solutions. The likelihood that successful solutions will be found increases because the sequence narrows the focus to fulfillment of the mission but broadens the search for acceptable solutions to include all that would further it. The dangers of *jumping to solutions* and thereby producing a blunder or debacle are minimized (Nutt, 2002).

Agreement on purpose provides a very powerful means of social control. To the extent that the purposes are socially justified and virtuous, agreement will inform organizational discussions and actions with a moral quality that can constrain self-serving and organizationally destructive behavior on the part of organizational members. Said differently, agreement on purpose can lead to a mobilization of organizational energies based on pursuit of a morally justifiable mission beyond self-interest (Lewis & Gilman, 2012).

Another desired outcome of this step is the explicit attention given to philosophy, values, and culture. Organizations rarely discuss these matters directly. As a result, they are likely to misread their strengths and weaknesses and thus make mistakes in the internal assessment step to come. Also, without understanding their philosophy, values, and culture, organizations are likely to make serious errors in the strategy formulation step. They may choose strategies that are not consonant with their philosophy, values, and culture and that, therefore, are doomed to fail unless a well-conceived strategy for culture change is pursued as well (Johnson, Whittington, Regnér, Scholes, & Angwin, 2017; Schein, 2016).

Finally, as a result of answering the six mission-development questions that come after the next section on stakeholder analyses, the organization will be well on its way to developing a clear vision of success. Indeed, answers to these questions may provide organizational members with the conception that must precede any actual perceptions of success. In other words, it is conceiving and believing that make seeing possible (Weick, 1995).

**STAKEHOLDER ANALYSES**

A stakeholder analysis is a valuable prelude to a mission statement, a SWOC/T analysis, and effective strategies. Indeed, I usually argue that if an organization has time to do only one thing when it comes to strategic planning, it ought to be a stakeholder analysis. Stakeholder analyses are critical because the key to success in the public and nonprofit sectors—and the private sector, too, for that matter—is the satisfaction of key stakeholders. If an organization does not know who its stakeholders are, what criteria they use to judge the organization, and how the organization is performing against those criteria, there is little likelihood that the organization (or community) will know what it should do to satisfy its key stakeholders (Rainey, 2014).

An example may prove instructive at this point. The example shows how a misreading of who the key stakeholders are can cause serious trouble for an organization, how a better reading can improve things dramatically, and how building on a series of stakeholder analyses can lead to far greater fulfillment of the mission. The story plays out over almost 30 years and comes from the Division of Fish and Wildlife of the Department of Natural Resources in a Midwestern state. The department (as the state's agent) is one of the major landowners in the United States. It manages a vast area, including water, forests, mineral and land resources, and huge populations of fish and wildlife. The fish and wildlife resources are important to in-state and out-of-state anglers and hunters and to the large recreational and tourist industries that depend on them. A large fraction of the state's people identify themselves as anglers and hunters, and a large number of others enter the state each year to fish and hunt.

As such, one might think that the Division of Fish and Wildlife would be one of the most protected and supported units of this state's government, that legions of interest groups—from the National Rifle Association to resort-industry groups to recreational equipment dealer associations—would be continually lobbying state legislators and the governor to maintain, if not increase, public financial support for the division. When our story begins, however, such was emphatically not the case. Indeed, quite the opposite. The division had been under frequent attack from some key stakeholders—hunters and anglers. They argued that the division saw itself primarily as a regulator and naysayer to these stakeholders. They felt it was completely uninterested in their satisfaction.

The division decided to engage in strategic planning to turn around an increasingly bad situation. One of the first steps was a stakeholder analysis. The most important piece of information to emerge from that analysis was that the professionals in the division operated under the mistaken assumption that, in effect, the prime stakeholders were fish and deer. They felt their job was to regulate anglers and hunters so that the state's fish and wildlife resources could be protected and managed over the long term.

There would have been little problem with this view if the fish and deer could vote, spend money, and pay taxes. But they cannot—and anglers, hunters, and their families do, along with the owners of resorts and sporting goods establishments. Although the division's maintenance of fish and wildlife resources was obviously one criterion that anglers and hunters used to judge its performance, there were many more as well (such as its ability to provide enjoyable recreational opportunities), and the division was failing in many instances. The result was hostility on the part of these stakeholders and attempts in the legislature to cut the division's budget and curtail its powers. As a result of insights gained from the stakeholder analysis, the division began pursuing several strategies to manage fish and wildlife resources effectively in the long term while increasing the satisfaction of hunters and anglers (and not alienating environmentalists!). The division has, in fact, dramatically increased support from the sports groups.

But the division and its encompassing department did not stop there. They embraced strategic planning and began to work at issues that mattered to the department's key stakeholders and developed a synthesis of divisional missions and mandates. By taking a bigger-picture view, the department developed a new mission focused on what is now called ecosystem-based management, including working with citizens to protect and manage the state's natural resources (not just those that are state-owned), to provide outdoor recreation opportunities and to provide for commercial uses of natural resources in a way that creates a sustainable quality of life. The new mission has the support of all the major stakeholders (though they certainly do not all support the department on every issue) because it took their interests into account. The mission and the strategies used to pursue it have won the department accolades nationally and internationally for innovative approaches to involving the public and to pursuing the common good. And it all began—at least in part—with a simple stakeholder analysis almost 30 years ago.

The compatibility of strategic planning with many newer governance and management approaches is directly related to the emphasis on addressing key stakeholder needs, including those who might be termed “customers.” For example, a hallmark of government reinvention, reengineering, and continuous quality improvement in both public and nonprofit sectors is their emphasis on meeting customer expectations (Cohen, Eimicke, & Heikkila, 2013). In contrast, approaches emphasizing cocreation and coproduction of goods, services, and indeed governance typically do not use the customer language. Nonetheless, attention to stakeholders is crucial for cocreation and coproduction to succeed (Osborne, Radnor, Vidal, and Kinder, 2014; Voorberg et al., 2015).

Resource A presents a variety of stakeholder analyses. In general, the three that are most useful for developing a mission statement are the Basic Analysis Technique, Power Versus Interest Grid, and Stakeholder Influence Diagram. These analyses may have been produced as part of developing an initial agreement, in which case they should be revisited. If these analyses have not been conducted, then now is the time. Here we present them in brief.

The Basic Analysis Technique consists of a minimum of three steps. The first step is to identify exactly who the organization's stakeholders are. [Figure 4.1](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781119071617/epub/OPS/c04.xhtml?create=true#c04-fig-0001) presents a typical stakeholder map for a government. The stakeholders are numerous (though many organizations have even more).

[**Figure 4.1**](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781119071617/epub/OPS/c04.xhtml?create=true#R_c04-fig-0001). Stakeholder Map for a Government.

Five additional points should be made about this figure. First, the diagram makes clear that any organization (and especially a government), network, or collaboration is an arena in which individuals and groups contest for control of its attention, resources, and output (Crosby & Bryson, 2005; Weber & Waeger, 2017). A major purpose of a stakeholder analysis is to get a more precise picture of the players in the arena.

Second, it is important to identify stakeholders at the right level of aggregation. For example, it is certainly true that citizens are a key stakeholder of governments, but saying so does not help much because the citizenry really consists of a host of different stakeholders with different stakes or interests in what the government does or does not do. There is an art to knowing what level of aggregation to pick, and the choice can influence subsequent analyses about how well the organization is doing with its stakeholders and what it needs from specific stakeholders. In general, stakeholders should be differentiated if doing so would make a difference in expectations placed on the organization and the responses it might make (Ackermann & Eden, 2011).

Third, special note should be made of future generations. I believe strongly that organizations (and especially governments) have an obligation to leave the world in as good shape as they found it, if not better. It is important to keep this public trust in mind in this era of special interest groups and a strong lurch to the far political right that seems to devalue the stewardship function of government and public institutions. As Theodore Roosevelt said, “We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children.”

Fourth, it is very important for key employee groups to be explicitly identified. Not all employees are the same. There are different groups with different roles to play who will use different criteria to judge organizational performance. Clarity about these groups is necessary to ensure that organizational responses are sufficiently differentiated.

I worked with a public library that presents an interesting example in this regard. It took considerable encouragement on my part to get the librarians to identify themselves as key stakeholders. Their self-effacing and altruistic view of themselves as public servants was admirable but misplaced. By definition, they are key stakeholders of the organization, and their own satisfaction is important to the success of their services. Indeed, one of the issues driving the strategic planning process for the library was the fact that the librarians were experiencing increased stress and even “burnout” as a result of heightened demands on their services. Something had to be done to alleviate the stress. Furthermore, several of the key criteria they use to judge organizational performance relate to the professional standards the library does or does not meet (including, for example, guaranteeing First Amendment protections). In other words, it is usually the professional librarians themselves, not other stakeholders, who hold the organization to exacting professional standards of service.

Fifth, some key stakeholders for many organizations and communities are likely to be quite distant physically; nonetheless, they must be considered carefully. For example, federal and state governments and distant corporate headquarters of local establishments typically have a significant impact on local communities.

The second step in the analysis is to specify the criteria the stakeholders use to assess the organization's performance. There are two approaches to this task. One is to guess what the criteria are; the second is to ask the stakeholders themselves. The strategic planning team should always make its own guesses, but at some point, it may prove instructive and politically useful to ask stakeholders (for example, through surveys, interviews, or group discussions) to profess their criteria.

Why should the team always make its own guesses? First, it is faster. Second, the stakeholders may not be completely honest. In the case of city council members, for example, city employees usually say a key criterion is whether the performance of city departments enhances their reelection prospects. Council members are unlikely to declare this criterion in public even though it is indeed important to them. On the other hand, asking stakeholders what their criteria are can be instructive because the team's own guesses can be wrong (Thomas, Poister, & Su, 2015).

The third step in the process is to make a judgment about how well the organization performs against the stakeholders' criteria. The judgments need not be very sophisticated. Simply noting whether the organization does poorly, okay, or very well against the criteria is enough to prompt a very useful discussion. Additional topics of discussion should include areas of organizational strength and weakness; overlaps, gaps, conflicts, and contradictions among the criteria; and opportunities and challenges or threats posed by the organization's current performance.

These three steps should help set the stage for a discussion of the organization's mission (or a community's purposes and values). In particular, a stakeholder analysis forces team members to place themselves in the shoes of others—especially outsiders—and make a rather dispassionate assessment of the organization's performance from the outsiders' points of view. Such activity is one of the best possible ways to avoid the attributes of folly that Tuchman describes. It is also likely to be a necessary precursor of ethical action (Lewis & Gilman, 2012). In addition, the stakeholder analysis provides a valuable prelude to the SWOC/T analysis (Step 4), strategic issue identification (Step 5), and strategy development (Step 6).

If time permits, or circumstances demand, three additional steps may be advisable. In the fourth, the strategic planning team may wish to discuss exactly how the various stakeholders influence the organization. Many members of the team may not know precisely how the organization is influenced, and the discussion may also highlight the really important stakeholders. The Power Versus Interest Grid and Stakeholder Influence Diagram techniques can help move this discussion forward.

Fifth, the strategic planning team may wish to discuss what the organization needs from each stakeholder group. I have emphasized the need for the organization to satisfy key stakeholder groups, but it may also be very important to focus attention directly on what the organization needs to survive and prosper. The usual assumption is that if the organization satisfies key stakeholders, it can survive and prosper. But that may not be true, especially when there is a difference between funders and service recipients (as is often the case for public and nonprofit organizations). A direct focus on what the organization needs to survive may reveal an important strategic issue to address: How can the organization secure the resources necessary to continue pursuit of its mission when it does not already receive those resources from the key stakeholders?

Finally, the team may wish to establish a rough ordering among the stakeholders according to their importance to the organization. The order, of course, might vary with different issues, but the rough ordering will give the team an idea of which stakeholders demand the most attention.

A Power Versus Interest Grid arrays stakeholders according to their power to place a claim on the organization's attention, resources, or output and according to their interest in the organization's attention, resources, or output. Four categories of stakeholders result: Those with high power and high interest are called *players*. Those with high power and low interest are called *context setters* because their power helps set the context but they are not interested enough to be players. Those with high interest and lower power are called *subjects* as they are subject to the power of others. And those with low interest and low power form the *crowd* (Ackermann & Eden, 2011). The mission certainly must take the players and context setters into account in some way, even if the organization's ultimate purpose is to serve the subjects or crowd (Bryson, Cunningham, & Lokkesmoe, 2002).

A Stakeholder Influence Diagram begins with a Power Versus Interest Grid. Once stakeholders are located on the grid, arrows can be drawn in to show which stakeholders influence whom. (In tandem, a Power Versus Interest Grid and Stakeholder Influence Diagram can be used to help facilitate and formalize completion of the three final steps in the Basic Analysis Technique.)

The team has to decide whether to circulate the stakeholder analysis (or analyses) outside the strategic planning team. It is primarily just an input to other steps in the process (mission statement, SWOC/T analysis, strategic issue identification, strategy development, implementation), so there may be no good reason for more public discussion (especially if a major purpose of the strategic planning effort is to change the power, interest, influence, or other aspects of the organization's current stakeholders).

**THE MISSION STATEMENT**

A mission statement is a declaration of organizational purpose. Mission statements vary in length depending on their intended use, but they are typically short—no more than a page—and often not more than a punchy slogan. They should also be targeted, activist in tone, and inspiring. And they should lead to measures that will indicate whether the mission is being achieved.

The actual statement should grow out of discussions aimed at answering six questions. The statement should at least touch on most answers though for some purposes it may be distilled into a slogan. Answers to the six questions (outlined below) will provide the basis for developing a vision of success later in the process.

Developing the answers is a valuable but very demanding process. Several hours (and in some cases days) of discussion by the strategic planning team may be required to reach consensus on the answers, and perhaps additional time for reflection may be necessary. Sometimes the discussions may seem too philosophical or academic to be of much use. If discussions start to get bogged down in grand abstractions or minutiae, by all means move ahead. Assign someone the task of writing up what has been covered so far, including points of agreement and disagreement, and come back for further discussions when the time seems right or when decisions must be reached. Strategic planning should not be allowed to get in the way of useful action. However, it is important to remember that strategic planning *is* ultimately about purpose, meaning, value, and virtue and, therefore, is philosophical at its base. To paraphrase management guru Peter Drucker, strategic planning involves responding to a series of Socratic questions. The six questions that follow structure one of the most important parts of that Socratic dialogue:

1. *Who are we?* If your organization were walking down the street and someone asked it who it was, what would the answer be? The question is one of identity, defined as what organizational members believe is distinct, central, and enduring about their organization (Dutton & Dukerich, 1991; Rughase, 2007). The answer certainly may need to be more than just what appears on the organization's letterhead as the name there may not mean much. Clarity about identity is crucial because often the most effective way to influence a person is not to tell them what to *do* but to communicate who he or she is. So, too, with organizations. Because of the strong cultures, traditions, and reputations, to say that we are the Internal Revenue Service, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, or the United States Marine Corps carries a great deal of meaning and implies a great deal about what we can and ultimately will do. Public and nonprofit organizations that achieve excellence and endurance are guided by a combination of a guiding purpose and fundamental values. They also have a willingness to change and adapt yet still maintain their core (Goodsell, 2010).

It is also important to ask a question about identity in order to help the organization draw a distinction between what it is and what it does. Too many organizations make a fundamental mistake when they assume they are what they do, meaning they conflate mission and strategy. Although it can be hard to know what something is without seeing what it does, it is still important not to assume that something is only what it appears to do. If that mistake is made, important avenues of strategic response to environmental conditions can be unwittingly sealed off. At best, the organization fails to create as much public value as it can; at worst, it becomes irrelevant.

Finally, if collaboration is important to the organization, it is also important to note that the organization's identity may well change at least some as collaborative relationships and the identity of the collaboration itself develop. This is to be expected and should be acknowledged as part of the process (Clarke & Fuller, 2010). The fact that cycles of identity change typically occur in collaborative relationships underscores the need for the partners to value change in the pursuit of their missions. It also emphasizes the need to honor the previous identity while partially estranging people from it—in keeping with the idea that if you want change, you should also emphasize stability (Cameron & Quinn, 2011).

1. *What are the basic social and political needs we exist to meet or what are the basic social or political problems we exist to address?* The answer to this question, along with the organization's mandates, provides the basic social justification for the organization's existence and much of the source of its legitimacy. The purpose of the organization is to meet the needs or address the problems. The organization can then be seen as a means to an end and not as an end in itself; the real end is to create public value in areas that need it. This question may need to be asked stakeholder by stakeholder.
2. *In general, what do we do to recognize, anticipate, and respond to these needs or problems?* This question prompts the organization to actively stay in touch with the needs it is supposed to fill, or the problems it is supposed to address, typically through continuing informal and formal research. Left to their own devices, organizations generally will talk primarily to themselves, not to outsiders (Wilson, 1989). When we see individuals talking mainly to themselves in the absence of a smartphone with ear buds, we often suspect mental illness. When we see organizations talking primarily to themselves, we should suspect some sort of pathology as well. In order to remain “healthy,” organizations must be encouraged to stay in touch with the outside world that justifies their existence and provides the resources to sustain them.

Furthermore, constant attention to external needs or problems is likely to prompt the necessary adjustments to the organization's mission (though these would probably be rare), mandates, or product or service level and mix, costs, financing, management, and structure necessary for it to remain effective. Successful innovations typically are a response to real needs or problems; mere technological feasibility is not enough (Borins, 2014; Van de Ven, Polley, Garud, & Venkataraman, 1999). Moreover, much or most of the information critical to the creation of innovations usually comes from outside the organization. The more people in the organization as a whole who attend to external needs and problems, the more likely a climate conducive to innovation and effectiveness will prevail and the easier it will be to justify desirable innovations to internal audiences (Rainey, 2014). Finally, people often need to be reassured that they will not be punished for returning from the outside world with bad news. We all have seen messengers shot down because key decision makers didn't like the message. An explicit endorsement of contact with the outside world is likely to make the organization a safer haven for messengers who carry bad news that needs to be heard.

1. *How should we respond to our key stakeholders?* This question asks the organization to decide what relations it wishes to establish with its key stakeholders and what values it seeks to promote through those relations. For example, it almost always pays to be open to what people have to say, to listen, and to engage in constructive dialogue (Scharmer, 2016). This question also focuses on what the stakeholders value and what the organization does to provide that. Obviously, a more detailed discussion of what the organization could do may have to wait until Step 6, but discussions of this sort can be pursued usefully throughout the process. In this step, it is particularly important to encourage people to talk and think in terms of creating public value.
2. *What are our philosophy, values, and culture?* The importance of reflecting on and clarifying an organization's philosophy, core values, and culture becomes most apparent in the strategy development step. Only strategies that are consonant with the philosophy, core values, and culture are likely to succeed; strategies that are not are likely to fail unless culture change is a key part of the strategy (Cameron & Quinn, 2011; Schein, 2016). Clarity about philosophy and values in advance of strategy development is one way to avoid leaving out attention to needed culture change.

Perhaps even more important, however, is that clarity about philosophy, core values, and culture will help an organization maintain its integrity. If an organization is clear about its philosophy and core values, it is able to more easily refuse any proposals or actions that are likely to damage its integrity and accept those that maintain or enhance its integrity. In a time when public confidence in most institutions is low, maintaining organizational integrity is vital. Once it is damaged, it is very difficult to reestablish public confidence in the organization as the 2014 scandal (and its aftermath) besetting the Veterans Administration over treatment of veterans shows. The VA case clearly demonstrates how important it is for government organizations (and their political masters) to explicitly embrace virtuous philosophy, core values, and culture and how much effort must be expended on building and maintaining an organization that reflects them (Goodsell, 2010).

A caution is in order at this point, however. It might be argued that relatively open discussion of philosophy, values, and culture could actually damage an organization's effectiveness in some cases. Because only publicly acceptable aspects of philosophies, values, and culture are likely to be discussed in public, an organization whose success depends in part on pursuit of values not favored by significant parts of the public could suffer. For example, a local economic development agency may in effect further the ends of wealthy land developers as part of its strategy of encouraging private development and investment to boost the local economy. No matter how beneficial such a strategy ultimately is to the community, it is probably unacceptable in most parts of the country for a government agency to say publicly that as a byproduct of successful pursuit of its mission, it helps the rich get richer. Public discussion of the agency's philosophy and values, therefore, might require the agency to change its strategy and, as a result, perhaps become less effective. At the very least, the agency may need to engage in some public education about the virtues of private markets and the fact that there is no guarantee that private developers and investors will survive in those markets.

Key decision makers have to decide whether to go public with a discussion of the organization's philosophy, values, and culture. Those interested in “reform” are likely to favor public discussion; those against are not. The point to be made, of course, is that *any* discussion of philosophy, values, and culture, whether public or not, will have political consequences (Stone, 2011).

1. *What makes us distinctive or unique?* There was a time not so very long ago when it seemed public organizations were, in Herbert Kaufman's term (1976), *immortal*. Not anymore. *Cutback management* or *downsizing* are now terms familiar to most public managers, many public organizations or parts of organizations have disappeared, and the number of public functions that are being carried out by private or nonprofit organizations has increased. Privatization is here to stay, and its domain may increase (Bozeman, 2010; Kettl, 2015a, 2015c). Public organizations must be quite clear about what makes them or the functions they perform distinctive or unique or they will be likely candidates for privatization. Indeed, if there is nothing distinctive or unique about a public organization or function, then perhaps it should be privatized. Nonprofit organizations need to be clear about what makes them distinctive or unique or they, too, may find themselves at a competitive disadvantage (Bryson, Gibbons, & Shaye, 2001). The world has become increasingly competitive, and those organizations that can't point to some distinct contribution they make may lose out.

**Some Examples**

Some examples can help illustrate how these mission questions might be answered or at least touched upon. Earlier, the mission statements for MEDA and INTOSAI were presented (see [Exhibits 4.1](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781119071617/epub/OPS/c04.xhtml?create=true#c04-fea-0001) and [4.2](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781119071617/epub/OPS/c04.xhtml?create=true#c04-fea-0002)). Although both are relatively short, each grew out of extensive discussions, emphasizes important purposes to be served, and articulates what many employees would see as a *calling* worthy of their commitment (Goodsell, 2010).

Note that MEDA's mission changed between its 2011–2015 and 2016–2020 strategic plans. The reasons behind this change are discussed further in [Chapter 5](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781119071617/epub/OPS/c05.xhtml). The main reason is simply that MEDA desired to focus on its core business, helping minority entrepreneurs and business, and decided to deemphasize what it could do much less about, namely, helping communities grow.

Another example comes from the Amherst H. Wilder Foundation, a large nonprofit operating foundation located in St. Paul, Minnesota. It provides a wide range of effective and often quite innovative social services and programs. The mission statement, presented in [Exhibit 4.3](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781119071617/epub/OPS/c04.xhtml?create=true#c04-fea-0003), is somewhat lengthy, but it clearly authorizes and prompts the foundation to seek the biggest impact it can in its chosen domain. Wilder has been guided by virtually the same mission for well over 100 years. The foundation has added what they call an impact statement that provides for a more targeted statement of purpose within the broader mission.

**Exhibit 4.3. Mission and Focus of the Amherst H. Wilder Foundation.**

**Mission Statement (from Articles of Incorporation–1974)**

The mission of the Amherst H. Wilder Foundation is to promote the social welfare of persons resident or located in the greater Saint Paul metropolitan area by all appropriate means including:

* Relief of the poor
* Care of the sick and aged
* Care and nurture of children
* Aid of the disadvantaged and otherwise needy
* Promotion of physical and mental health
* Support of rehabilitation and corrections
* Provision of needed housing and social services
* Operation of residences and facilities for the aged, the infirm and those requiring special care

And, in general, the conservation of human resources by the provision of human services responsive to the welfare needs of the community, all without regard to, or discrimination on account of, nationality, sex, color, religious scruples or prejudices.

**Impact**

Wilder provides services that build hope and resiliency for children and families through mental health, education, housing, social adjustment, early childhood and aging programs. We build community capacity through leadership development programs, community initiatives and collaborations that bring people together to solve complex social challenges. Wilder Research studies evidence and provides applied and practical research in the field of human services.

*Source:* Amherst H. Wilder Foundation, [https://www.wilder.org](https://www.wilder.org/), accessed July 27, 2017; <https://www.wilder.org/AboutUs/Impact/Pages/default.aspx>; accessed June 3, 2017.

**PROCESS DESIGN AND ACTION GUIDELINES**

Several process guidelines should be kept in mind as a strategic planning group works at clarifying mission and mandates:

1. *Someone should be put in charge of compiling the organization's formal and informal mandates*. The group should then review and discuss this list and make any appropriate modifications. The group should pay particular attention to what is required and what is not ruled out and what mandates the organization should try to change.
2. *The group should complete a stakeholder analysis using the worksheets found in Bryson and Alston* *(*2011*)*. (The worksheets take the group through the Basic Analysis Technique and Power Versus Interest Grid; other techniques are discussed in Resource A.) Public and nonprofit organizations typically consist of shifting coalitions involving networks of internal and external stakeholders. Organizational purpose should be crafted at least in part out of a consideration of these stakeholders' interests. Otherwise, successful agreement on organizational purposes is unlikely (Fisher & Ury, 2011; Spee & Jarzabkowski, 2017; Thompson, 2014).
3. *After completing the stakeholder analysis, the group should fill out the mission statement worksheets also found in Bryson and Alston (*2011*)*. The worksheets make use of the six questions outlined on pp. 134–138. Group members should fill them out as individuals first and then discuss their answers as a group. Extra time must be reserved for a “culture audit,” which is necessary to identify organizational philosophy, values, and culture. (Guidelines for performing a culture audit can be found in Cameron & Quinn, 2011; Johnson et al., 2017; Khademian, 2002; and Schein, 2016.)
4. *After answering the questions and discussing the answers, the group should turn the task of developing a draft mission statement (and perhaps a separate values statement) over to an individual*. It is very important to allow sufficient time for deliberation about the draft mission statement, particularly if any changes in mission are contemplated for the draft. Quick agreement may occur but should not be expected. For organizations facing *simple* or *complicated* situations, ideally the mission should be directly measurable or else indirectly measurable through closely associated measurable goals or performance indicators. Otherwise, the mission may well be a “mission impossible” and the satisfaction of employees and other key stakeholders may suffer (Poister, Aristigueta, & Hall, 2015; Wright & Davis, 2003). For organizations facing *complex* situations, the mission is more likely to draw attention to those principles best thought to guide action. These should be phrased in such as way they lend themselves to ongoing assessments of their effectiveness.

Sawhill and Williamson (2001) found that the nonprofit organizations they studied had the most success with the indirect measurement approach though the direct approach could work as well. The best of the measurable missions or goals “(1) set the bar high, (2) helped focus the organization on high-leverage strategies, (3) mobilized the staff and donors, and (4) served multiple purposes, such as setting the larger public agenda about a certain issue” (p. 383). Further, organizations found that it was best to keep measures simple and easy to communicate, that the measures and performance against them made the organization “marketable” to boards of directors and donors interested in effectiveness and accountability and that the measures made management easier (pp. 384–385).

After an agreed-upon mission statement is developed, the group also may wish to brainstorm a slogan that captures the essence of the mission or run a contest among organizational members or stakeholders for an appropriate slogan. For example, a public library with which I worked came up with the wonderful slogan—“Mind of the City”—which emphasizes intelligence, learning, information and information technology, community, and wholeness rather than an older view of libraries as book warehouses.

1. *It is important not to get stalled by development of a mission statement*. If the group hits a snag, record areas of agreement and disagreement, then move on to the next steps. Return later to discuss the mission based on any additional information or solutions that turn up in future steps.
2. *Strategic planning teams should expect to have to reexamine their draft mission statement as they move through the process, either to reaffirm the statement or to redraft it in light of additional information or reflection*. Steps 4 through 6 provide additional opportunities to discuss the mission. As the process continues, more detail may be added to the mission statement in terms of types of programs, products, services, or relationships that will be offered to stakeholders, particularly those who are customers.
3. *Once agreement is reached on a mission statement, it should be kept before the strategic planning group as it moves through the planning process*. The group should refer to the statement as it seeks to formulate goals, identify strategic issues, develop effective strategies, prepare a vision of success, and in general resolve conflicts among the team. The organization's mission provides a basis for resolving conflicts based on purposes and interests, not positions (Fisher & Ury, 2011).
4. *Once general agreement is reached, the mission should be visible to all organizational members*. It should be referred to in preambles to official organizational actions and posted on walls and in offices; it should become a *physical* presence in the organization. Otherwise, it is likely to be forgotten at the very times it is most needed. Explicit reference to the mission should be the standard first step in resolving conflicts. The organization that forgets its mission will drift, and opportunism and the loss of integrity are likely to spread and perhaps become rampant. Organizational survival itself—or at least the survival of its leadership—will then be in serious question (Kouzes & Posner, 2017; Selznick, 1957).
5. *Adoption of the organization's mission should mark an important decision point*. Agreement may not occur at the end of this step, however, as the draft mission may be revised over the course of the strategic planning process. Formal agreement on the organization's mission definitely should be reached by the end of the strategy development step or review and adoption step.
6. *Organizations not engaged in a full-blown strategic planning process may still want to hold mission retreats periodically to reaffirm and/or revisit and modify their mission*. Retreats that prompt organizational members to focus on mission (and vision) may be helpful during the organization's formative period and at multiyear intervals after that. The dialogue at such retreats may bring to light the need for some organizational tinkering that can be dealt with promptly or perhaps highlight a strategic issue to be addressed later.

**SUMMARY**

This chapter discussed identifying mandates an organization faces and clarifying the mission it wishes to pursue. Mandates are typically imposed from the outside and may be considered the “musts” that the organization is required to pursue (though it may want to do them as well). Mission is typically developed more from the inside; it identifies the organization's purposes. Mission may be considered what the organization “wants” to do. Rarely is an organization so boxed in by mandates that its mission is totally limited to meeting the mandates. Mandates and mission jointly frame the domain within which the organization seeks to create public value. Jointly they articulate the boundaries for desirable search and action in pursuit of organizational purposes on the one hand, and the territory of prohibited actions on the other hand (Hill & Hupe, 2014; Simons, 1995). Creating lasting public value requires that the enduring benefits of what the organization does and does not do must significantly outweigh the costs.