

What are you for?

What are you FOR? Maybe, just maybe, the biggest business planning question there is!

Essentially business planning is about asking yourself some big questions, and taking the time to arrive at the most informed answers you can. 'What am I FOR?' may be the most important question there is as you start on your business planning.

Knowing what you are for – what's important to you, and why you do what you do – is key to you identifying and articulating two things that **ALL** successful businesses and freelancers have:

A compelling vision: what you want in the future, the difference you want to see and make

A clear mission: what you do and why

The power of why! A really simple exercise to try...

It can be hard finding the answer – it's not often we reflect on why we do what we do, particularly if we are really busy just getting on with it. Here's a really simple exercise that we find can be really helpful...

Start by writing a sentence or two about what you do.

Look at what you've written and ask yourself why this is important.

Repeat up to 5 times, asking yourself 'why is this important'.

By the time you've done this 5 or so times, you should be getting a real sense of what your fundamental purpose is. It may really surprise you, and will hopefully be really energising. Looking at what you come up with can be a bit like when something goes really well and you have one of those 'Ah yes, that's why I do this!' moments!



Nailing your vision

Your **v i s i o n** is the big picture of your business (and your life). It's where you see yourself heading and includes...

How you're making a positive difference...

What success looks and feels like to you...

What makes life and work ripe with fulfillment and meaning.

Once you have a general picture of what success looks like to you, the next step is to create your 'vision statement': a short statement that looks towards the future that you want to see, the change you want to be and see in the world. As an example, here's the hub's vision statement:

A diverse and equal creative sector where artists and creative entrepreneurs are valued, supported and thrive.

Your vision statement acts as a foundation stone for your business or career. It sets out and should guide your future direction, so it's definitely worth spending a bit of time on getting it right. Trust us, you'll know in your gut when you've

Now tell the world!

Now you've worked all that out, the next thing you need to do is to turn those insights into a really inspiring sentence or 'mission statement'.

This statement explains to the world your reason for being; it's about who you are, what you do and why.

At the hub, ours is 'developing new thinking and practice in the arts'.

To do this, go back to all those whys you came up with, and if you're struggling maybe initially start your sentence with 'The purpose of my work/company is....'.



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Answer that, and you've nailed your 'mission'!

So, we said that business planning is about asking the big questions, right? Another key question you need to ask yourself is 'what is my/our purpose?'.

At its most fundamental, this question is about why you show up at work every day.

The answer you come up with is what, in business planning circles, is called 'your mission'.