

140 Character Mission Statement Assignment

Everybody has heard about mission statements because they are so pervasive in our society: schools have them; churches have them; businesses have them; even individuals often have personal mission statements. The problem is that most of these groups get so caught up in the words that they forget the purpose of a mission statement: to tell customers/clients what you do as briefly as possible **and** to guide internal actions of the operation. Mission statements, when well written, function as a decision-making tool to help a business (or school, or church or individual) decide among different courses of action.

Mission statements have become problematic because they have no sense of audience and purpose. As you know from your readings so far, audience and purpose are the cornerstones of quality writing. If we add the consideration that most people are tired of hearing long, boring mission statements that don't really say anything and that most people are simply impatient, we begin to see the wisdom of a 140 character mission statement. Additionally, the brevity of this type of mission statement really forces you to think clearly about what your business hopes to achieve (benefits) through a set of concrete actions (features).

Make no mistake, it's difficult to clearly and effectively communicate your business proposition in 140 characters or less. It forces you to choose powerful words and really focus on the benefits of your offer. Guillebeau offers us some guidance on page 105 of *\$100 Startups* about constructing this statement. He suggests starting with a "feature-based" mission statement and then translates that into a "benefits-based" mission statement. Your job in this assignment is to create both and ultimately, through our peer review process, these will blend into one statement that is stronger than either individually. The benefits-driven mission, as you know, articulates your offer from the client's (audience's) perspective and tells them what you're "really" selling.

Part 1: Feature-Based Mission

Complete a structure like this: *We provide [product or service] for [customers].*

Part 2: Benefits-Based Mission

Complete a structure like this: *We help [name your customer segment] do/achieve/improve/other strong verb [primary benefit].*

Notice the significant difference in the two. The first emphasizes YOU; the second emphasizes THEM and what your business does for the clients.