

MAP & FIRE



Defining and Sharing Your
Company's Direction:
The Big Picture

Big Picture Worksheet Overview

Welcome to our worksheet focused on defining the Big Picture thinking of your company!

The concept of your Big Picture is interesting in that it can be both the easiest and hardest area of your business to tackle.

It's the easiest in the sense that it largely comes from you. What do you want this company to be? Where do you see it going? What are your values? These are questions that only you can answer.

In other ways it's the hardest, because these questions really tap into a personal connection between who you are as a person and what your business represents.

We always recommend business owners start with these concepts because in many ways it shapes what your business can and should be. It frames all of your other activities and gives you a way to decide how to spend your resources. Which customers should you serve? How should you go about doing so? Which opportunities will bring you closer to your goals?

Many business owners struggle to answer questions like these -- sometimes for years. By taking some time to think about your company's Big Picture up front, you'll be well-equipped for the journey ahead.

Big Picture Worksheet Outcomes

Here are some of the key points we'll cover in the Big Picture worksheet:

- **Why** your company exists, in a fundamental sense
- **What** the world will look like if you accomplish everything you set out to do
- **How** you and your team will conduct yourselves as you execute your plans
- **Which** big milestones you'll hit along the way

Need Help?

For additional information on the components of this worksheet visit our website:

<http://mapandfire.com/field-guide/purpose>

Core Purpose

Core Purpose is the big picture reason **why** your company exists. It acts as a guiding star to focus all other business activities. When thinking about your core purpose, focus exclusively on the “why”, and do not include any methods, means, or specific approaches or executions — those will come later!

Questions

Separate from any financial aspirations, what was the driving force for creating your company? Was it connected to a passion, area of expertise, particular technological / product breakthrough, or simply an emotional drive to create a new path?

What is your company’s founding story? How has the business changed since then?

Exercise: Core Purpose Statement

Distill the essence of what you wrote above into a single sentence (try it a few times):

Further distill that idea into a 5 word (or less) sentence (try this a few times, too):

Vision Statement

Your Vision Statement describes the ultimate outcome of your efforts in terms of your impact on the world. It can be helpful to think of your Vision in terms of an “Envisioned Future” -- that is, a description of what the world *could be like* if you achieve everything you set out to do.

Questions

If you executed perfectly on everything you dream of doing, how would people’s lives be different? How would the world be changed?

What does that ideal future look like in six months, a year, and several years down the road?

What if you took your concept as far as you can possibly imagine?

Exercise: Vision Statement

Fill in each option to play with different approaches for wording what you aim to do:

No _____ suffer from _____
(broad customer segment) (problem(s) you solve)

All _____ are able to _____
(broad customer segment) (goal(s) to enable)

_____ are provided with _____ so that they can _____
(broad customer segment) (necessary resource(s)) (goal(s) to enable)

Core Values

Core values describe what we believe and how we behave. They are our principles and standards of conduct even (and especially) when things get difficult. Values give meaning to your business beyond financial goals, and are independent of specific business activities.

Questions

Here are some questions to help guide your thinking on Core Values (you don't have to answer them directly, but you can if you want!):

What behaviors are important and non-negotiable regardless of what you're doing?

How will you conduct yourself as you work to bring your vision to life?

How would you describe you and your team when you're performing at your best?

Exercise: Core Values

Choose ***between 1-3 Core Values*** in each of the core values tables below. You can also write your own into the blank spaces. You should aim for 5-8 core values in total.

Important Note: When we say Core Values we mean “core” in a very fundamental sense. These are the values that are essential to the identity of your business, not just things that are important in general. For example, “Equality” is definitely an essential core value for a Human Rights Campaign, but maybe it’s not as essential to the identity of a local burger joint.

Like everything in the Purpose step, choosing Core Values is about making tough choices among many appealing options.

Values: Fundamental Values and Basic Needs. (choose 1-3)			
Safety	Trust	Health	Competence
Compassion	Optimism	Curiosity	

Values: Esteem and Meaning (choose 1-3)			
Honesty	Justice	Equality	Efficiency
Connectivity	Generosity	Freedom	Tradition
Progress	Love	Fun	Agility
Respect	Vision	Courage	

Values: Self-Actualization & Higher Expression (choose 1-3)			
Imagination	Creativity	Integrity	Stewardship
Prosperity	Selflessness	Expression	Truth
Empowerment			

Tailoring Values for Your Business

There are only so many values-related words, so many Values lists look similar. To make your core values more meaningful, clarify what each one means to you below:

Core Value Keyword	Clarify what it means to your business

Making Your Vision Concrete by Defining Goals & Objectives

Goals are broad primary outcomes that move you closer to your Envisioned Future. Goals are often big-picture and may be qualitative or quantitative. These are best set at the organization level. Goals may be separated into short-term and long-term goals, and then further broken down into specific Objectives and Key Results.

Questions

Take a few minutes to free-write about some of your big-picture goals for the business. Think big, and list as many as you can.

Dig deeper: What *exactly* do you want to achieve? What does the business look like? What does your own life look like? What about the lives of the people you serve?

Exercise: Big Goals

Prioritize the 3 biggest goals from your list (you can merge two smaller goals if they contribute to a similar path):

BIG GOAL #1	BIG GOAL #2	BIG GOAL #3

Exercise: Aligning Goals and Vision

Use your Vision Statement and your top 3 Goals from above to fill in the chart below.

VISION STATEMENT			
BIG GOAL #	BIG GOAL #1	BIG GOAL #2	BIG GOAL #3
BIG GOAL DESCRIPTION			
Supports the Vision? (Yes or No)			
How does it support the Vision?			

Check Your Work:

Do the Goals all logically support the Vision you defined?

Are the Goals all large enough that you won't likely achieve each in the next 6-12 Months?

Are the Goals distinct, each representing an important but separate path to your Vision?

Exercise: Breaking Goals into Objectives

Under each Goal, fill in the Objectives required to achieve that Goal. Objectives can be thought of smaller goals that are more specific and concrete than the bigger goals.

Work on making your Objectives SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound).

Go back and look at your original list of Goals to see if some of them may serve as Objectives under one of the Big Goals.

BIG GOAL #1	BIG GOAL #2	BIG GOAL #3
GOAL #1 OBJECTIVES:	GOAL #2 OBJECTIVES:	GOAL #3 OBJECTIVES:

Assumptions and Experiments

As you're working on defining and *refining* the areas of your business, you'll need to make assumptions about what you're doing in order to make progress. Assumptions are a necessary part of working on a business, so there's nothing inherently wrong with making them — as long as you track them and work to prove them out.

We include this section on each worksheet so that you can get in the habit of tracking assumptions as you go. If an assumption poses a low level of risk for the success of your business, you may want to simply note it with plans to address it as you go. But if your business truly hinges on a particular assumption it may be necessary to pause the process and validate your assumption with an experiment before continuing on.

There's no perfect formula to assess risk severity, so you'll have to use your best judgement based on the data you have available. But if you start to see an accumulation of assumptions that depend on one another, that's probably a good sign to pause to make sure you don't create a house of cards.

Business Assumptions Template:

Use the template below to gather and prioritize assumptions you've made along the way.

Business Assumptions			
Assumption Description	Assumption relates to (The Problem / Your Solution)	Danger if assumption is false (High / Med / Low)	Confidence that assumption is true (High / Med / Low)

Running Experiments

Once you have an assumption that you feel needs to be validated, you can work on testing it using our experiment template in the Practice worksheet ([click here to access](#)).

This template will give you a clear outline for how to set up and execute a well defined business experiment. It will also make sure you're gathering clear data to validate your assumption.

Congratulations, You've Completed the Big Picture Worksheet!

After going through those exercises you should have a solid view of where you're heading and what you're looking to accomplish along the way. Those fundamental building blocks will serve you and your team well and keep you grounded through good times and bad...sickness and health...you know, they are a bit like marriage vows in that way.

Now it's time to think about the problem you're looking to solve and how you can best satisfy that for the audience in need of a solution.

Which leads us to...

What Next?

Next up in our process is a series on **Product / Market Fit**. We help you tackle this challenge in three key steps: Customers, Competition, and Offering.

Within those steps, you'll start by digging into what your customers are seeking to accomplish in their life and what they value in a solution you could provide. Next you'll look at how well you satisfy your customers' needs compared to the competition to look for opportunities and challenges. Finally, you'll build the connection between what your customers want and the actual features of what you're providing.

A Sneak Peek at the Product / Market Fit Series

Here's a sneak preview of what we'll cover:

- Who your Target Customer is, the needs (aka. "jobs") they're aiming to satisfy, and what they value in a solution.
- Who else is competing to satisfy the needs of your customers, and how you can claim a unique position amongst them.
- Where you should focus your resources to make your offering as strong and unique as possible.

Don't Wait - Get Started Now on your Product / Market Fit!