

# When to Revisit Your Mission Statement

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*How often should an organization's mission statement be revisited and under what circumstances should it be changed?*

Unlike a vision statement, a mission statement is usually an enduring message that remains constant throughout an organization's existence. There are numerous examples of health care organizations with mission statements that were established at the organization's founding a century or more ago. However, circumstances may arise that require revisiting mission statements. Your strategic planning process, which

likely takes place every three to five years, is an opportune time to reflect on your mission statement and ask the question: does our mission statement need to change?

The answer to this question is often no, as careful review of the statement confirms that it explains clearly why your organization exists. If you think there is cause to modify your mission statement, it is likely for one of the following reasons:

- Your mission statement is not concise or clear: Your mission statement is meant for both internal and external audiences. It must reflect your organization's purpose in an understandable and memorable way. If an employee of your organization would have a difficult time reciting your mission statement, it likely needs to be reconsidered. This does not mean the essence of your mission needs to change; simply the way it is stated can be improved.
- Your mission does not reflect significant changes in your organization: The incremental changes most health care organizations experience from year to year do not represent a significant divergence in the purpose of why they exist. However, if your organization enters an entirely new business or exits an existing business, the purpose of your organization may change. Similarly if your organization has a major growth spurt, often the result of inorganic growth these days, or merges with another organization, you may need to reevaluate your mission statement.

When did you last revisit your organization's mission statement? ●