

Social Purpose Statement Criteria

Introduction

The Social Purpose Statement Criteria tool is designed to help you craft a clear, authentic, and impactful purpose statement that aligns with your core business and inspires meaningful change. It outlines four essential qualities and ten actionable criteria to create an effective social purpose statement.

Qualities

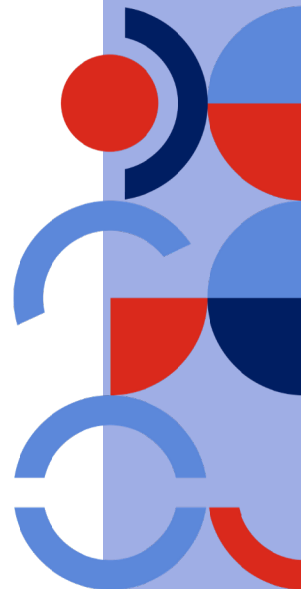
Authentic social purpose statements reflect these four core qualities.

- **Defines the company's core reason for being:** Goes beyond profit maximization, serving a higher purpose that isn't limited to benefiting customers or delivering products and services.
- **Focuses on pro-social impact:** Contributes tangible benefits to society by addressing key challenges facing people and / or the planet profitably and representing the company's optimal strategic contribution to long-term well-being for all.
- **Not a marketing tool or CSR initiative:** It's not a brand purpose, tagline or cause. It is not the company's approach to corporate social responsibility, corporate sustainability, ESG or philanthropy. It's the company's fundamental reason for existence, not just a program or initiative.
- **Answers "We exist to...":** Begins with an action verb that describes the company's role, followed by the positive societal outcome the company seeks to achieve.

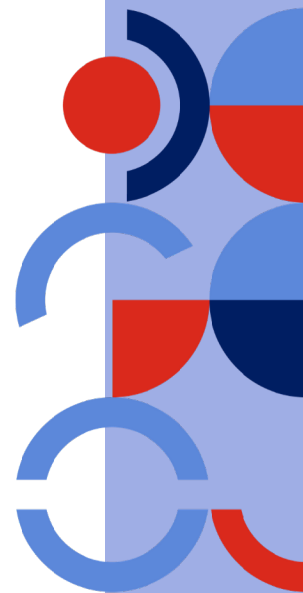
Criteria

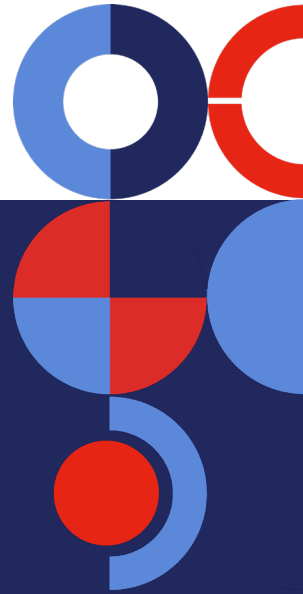
These ten criteria provide practical guidance for drafting or refining your company's social purpose statement. Applying them ensures that your statement is credible, inspires and mobilizes employees and stakeholders, attracts customers, partners, and investment, focuses your strategy, and enables organizational agility. Following these criteria will help ensure your company has a believable, actionable and impactful social purpose statement.

1. Relevance	Reflect your business, not just ANY business, and avoid self-interest. Tackle the big issues in your industry.
2. Society	Address a societal issue that resonates with your business and make a commitment to contribute to solutions. Don't focus solely on your products or customers.
3. Legacy	Tie your purpose to the legacy or origin story of the company, i.e., why the business was founded.
4. Bold	Ensure the company is addressing a meaningful, impactful and sizable issue with audaciousness. Make hearts beat faster.
5. Inspirational	Accelerate positive change that benefits people and inspires action. Create a rallying cry that invites your stakeholders to join the movement your purpose reflects.



6. Succinct	Choose focused words that are clear, unambiguous and don't need explanation. Get to the point and avoid marketing slogans, buzzwords, or vague platitudes. (Aim for about eight words.)
7. Creative	Be distinctive, specific and focused: apply out-of-the box thinking to differentiate from competitors. Use alliteration, rhymes or other language to make your purpose memorable. Avoid generic statements that could apply to any company.
8. Positivity	Use positive language unless highlighting a clear nemesis or challenge to overcome.
9. Authenticity	Align your purpose with your organization's stated values to ensure authenticity and believability, fostering trust among stakeholders.
10. Feasibility	Leverage your organization's unique abilities and assets to create a purpose that is practical and actionable. Your purpose should allow room for your organization to grow and evolve.





Resource

Check out this additional resource for more ideas: [The 7 Elements of a Great Purpose Statement](#) by Afdhel Aziz, Founding Partner, Conspiracy of Love.

About the Canadian Purpose Economy Project

The Canadian Purpose Economy Project exists to accelerate the transition to the purpose economy. It engages national ecosystem actors to create an enabling environment for social purpose businesses to start, transition, thrive and grow. This paper is one in a series of reports exploring the roles of key actors to advance social purpose in business including accountants, boards, investors, associations, business schools and others. Subscribe to our updates at www.purposeeconomy.ca and sign our [Call to Purpose](#) to help us advance social purpose in business.