



BRIEF

# Vision

By [Mark Abbott](#)

## Introduction

Why does our company exist? Where are we going? Who are we as a people? What's the big dream we're collectively pursuing? Who are our Ideal Customers? Why do our Ideal Customers do business with us? What major short- and long-term goals align us and help us plot our progress?

For some companies, these questions are easy to answer. For others, they're a work in progress. Great companies consist of a tightly knit group of people with a unified, aligned, relatively small set of dreams, commitments, and goals — a Vision.



## Tool Overview

While the terminology used to describe the components of a company Vision may vary from company to company, a great company Vision clarifies the following:

- Our [Core Values](#) – the values of our ideal team members
- The [Compelling Why](#) that drives us day in and day out
- Our marketing strategy, including:
  - Our [Ideal Customer](#) – who our company serves
  - Our Industry and Niche – the product or service our company sells
  - Our [Compelling Value Proposition](#) – what makes us different
- Our goals, including:

- Our [Compelling and Audacious Goals](#) (CAGs)
  - Our 3-Year Goals
  - Our 1-Year Goals
  - Our [Rocks](#) (90-day goals)
- Our [SWOT analysis](#) of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats

At Ninety, we house this essential information in our customizable [Vision tool](#) so everyone in our company understands who we are, where we're going, and what guiding principles will get us there.

Some executives hold this information close to their chests, but we think this is a serious mistake. Great companies embrace a Vision big enough that all team members can see their own dreams being attainable if they share in the journey. The entire company needs to align with this Vision: they need to see, understand, and embrace the company's dreams, commitments, and goals as their own.

## Context

**The Vision tool is an essential frame of reference for everyone in the company.** Each component of the Vision is part of the compass of ideas and [agreements](#) that guides the decisions people in our organization make.

Company Rocks are prominently shared in the Vision tool because they indicate priorities for the next quarter. Rocks pave the path for 1-Year Goals, providing team members with a clear avenue toward realizing 3-Year Goals and reaching for Compelling Audacious Goals (CAGs). When Rock owners know how their Rock builds up to the company's CAGs, it's easier to get excited about how significant that progress is to the company's future.

In an ideal world, we hire people who share the same Core Values and whose personal goals align with the company's goals. They see how our dreams and their dreams complement one another. However, even in the best circumstances, team members need the occasional reminder to course-correct. The Core Values feature of the Vision tool reminds team members what ties the company together.

And most importantly, our Compelling Why is declared in the Vision tool. How can the recruiting team hire the right people if they don't know what drives us? The Compelling Why is the needle of our compass. Starting at this base level reveals the importance of our Vision and how much our Compelling Why and CAGs permeate the business.

## Core Disciplines of a Great Vision

1. **Use terms the whole company can align with.** Team members in the trenches should be just as excited about the Vision as your Senior Leadership Team.
2. **Keep it simple.** For example, a Compelling Why filled with industry jargon might work within the company but come across as clunky when communicated to the outside world.
3. Shout it from the rooftops! **Your Vision shouldn't be a secret.** Instead, share it widely to attract Ideal Customers and future team members.
4. **Remember to [SMARTen your company Rocks and CAGs](#).** Clearly defined and measurable goals are infinitely more likely to be reached.

## Hopefully Helpful Hints

**We're often asked how often your Compelling Why and CAGs should be updated.** A

Compelling Why is a deeper purpose. Thus, it should only change when there's a massive realignment across the company. It's worth reviewing during [Annual](#) and [Quarterly](#) Planning Meetings, but don't expect seismic shifts.

On the other hand, CAGs will inherently need updating as the due date approaches. Eventually, they'll become 3-Year Goals, then part of your annual plan. Planning meetings are the time to address these updates.

**Truly important things have names.** Consider this while working on your marketing strategy. The power of giving something a name is that it sharpens its definition. A B2B company's customers aren't just "businesses," they are "small and midsize businesses." The blog name shouldn't be just "Company Blog." Rather, it should be "An Inside Look at the Company."

**We believe the magic number for Core Values is between three and seven.** Any more, and they begin to lose their punch, so practice keep/kill/combine. If the team struggles to define Core Values, think of the most vital team members in the company. They usually exemplify the Core Values you want to see in new hires.

## Takeaway

When the concepts behind Compelling Why, Core Values, and CAGs are understood and shared through the Vision tool, an entire company can unite behind a singular Vision.

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