



Creating and executing a vision statement

At a glance:



Define your purpose: Craft a clear, ambitious, and memorable vision statement that aligns with your team's core beliefs.



Focus on key outputs: Specify the unique outcomes your team delivers to support the broader organisational goals.



Emphasise uniqueness and human connection: Reflect on your team's distinct strengths and ensure the statement resonates on a personal level.



Execution and consistency: Embed the vision into daily operations, making it a guiding principle across the team.



Make it meaningful and memorable: Reiterate and embody the vision consistently so it resonates deeply with the team.

Why your legal department needs a vision statement

A vision statement defines the purpose and aspirations of your legal department, giving clear direction to your team. As general counsel roles expand, a strategic approach is crucial, and a well-defined vision statement serves as the foundation for innovation and value creation. This statement should align with the organisation's goals, positioning the legal team as an integral part of broader corporate strategy.

Defining the vision statement

To craft a meaningful vision statement, reflect on key questions:

- What beliefs and passions drive your team?
- How does the organisation's purpose align with those values?
- What major achievements do you envision for your legal department?

A strong vision statement is short, specific, and unambiguous. It should embody ambition while remaining memorable and relevant to everyone in the department. Consider using a step-by-step approach, identifying where efforts are currently focused and aligning those with the organisation's values and direction.

Elements of a strong vision statement

When building your vision statement, consider these factors:



Purpose and motivation:

The vision statement should communicate the fundamental reason for the legal department's existence, motivating current employees and attracting new talent.

Steps in creating a vision statement



Define output:

Start by defining what your department does and whom it serves. This output-oriented approach connects your team's purpose with the broader organisation. For example: "We provide creative, focused legal advice that enables FunkyMoney to be an innovative and trusted challenger bank."



Clarity and believability:

Craft a statement that resonates with your team and stakeholders alike. It should be realistic and aligned with achievable goals.



Highlight uniqueness:

Define what makes your department distinct. For instance: "We're lawyers who think differently."



External comprehension:

A well-constructed vision statement helps external partners, stakeholders, and even the media understand the legal team's goals and values.



Incorporate human context:

Add relatable, real-world elements to make your vision memorable and visual. Example: "We want FunkyMoney to be the go-to banking app on everyone's phone."



Uniqueness:

Ensure your statement includes something only your department can achieve, setting it apart from others.



Bring it all together:

Combine these elements into a cohesive statement: "We're lawyers who think differently, providing creative, focused legal advice that empowers FunkyMoney to be the preferred banking app for everyone."

Executing the vision

A vision statement is only valuable if it resonates with the team and guides actions and decisions. To achieve this:



Personalise the vision:

Share your personal connection to the vision, creating authenticity and encouraging team members to find their own connection to it.



Encourage storytelling:

Have team members share how their work contributes to the vision, fostering ownership and unity.



Embed the vision in daily operations:

Use reminders such as slogans or visual cues, and refer to the vision frequently, making it an integral part of your team's culture.

Ensuring consistency and long-term success

Consistent adherence to the vision is essential for lasting impact. As Simon Sinek suggests, aligning actions with purpose makes the vision a core component of your team's function, not an add-on. By holding the vision constant, the purpose becomes ingrained in the team's collective mindset, driving cultural change and operational excellence.

Leaders like Tony Meola, former head of US consumer operations at Bank of America, exemplify this approach. Meola's unyielding focus on improving customer service reshaped his organisation's culture, leading to streamlined processes and long-lasting change. As Meola notes, "When you hold it constant like that, when you never waver, an amazing thing happens. The purpose sinks into the collective conscience. The culture changes, and the organization begins to perform at a higher level."

Based on an article written by Dr. Catherine McGregor, Strategic Consultant for the DLA Piper WIN Programme.