A lot of organisations have **mission statements**. A mission statement should tell its employees, customers and suppliers what an organisation is trying to achieve. The word 'mission' is taken from the army. For soldiers, the mission is the objective of a particular operation. A mission sets the direction and purpose.

The same is true for an organisation. Its mission may be to 'be the preferred supplier of equipment to the baking industry' or 'enable all the people in the local community to achieve their full potential, through education and training'. You have some idea of what the organisation is trying to achieve.

One quite famous mission statement, that used to be seen over the entrance to a boatyard in Virginia, in the USA, was 'to build good boats, at a profit if we can, at a loss if we must, but to build good boats'. As a customer, employee or investor, you had a good idea what the business’s broad objectives were!
What’s in a mission statement?

Mission statements usually say something about:

- **what the organisation does** (supplies baking equipment, educates people or builds boats);
- **who it does this for** (the baking industry or the local community);
- **the values** (or the things which it regards as important) which shape the way that the organisation operates (‘the preferred supplier’, ‘all the people...achieve their full potential’, ‘build good boats’).

These three elements aren’t always there, but they should influence the wording of a mission. A mission isn’t necessarily something that can be achieved. Rather it sets the direction in which an organisation is heading.

**Exercise**

- Does your employer have a mission statement? If so, what is it?
- Do members of your team all know the mission statement? Why or why not?

Mission statements can sometimes be unrealistic. The ‘preferred supplier’ has no chance if its products are poor and its service even worse. The organisation must fit what it does to what it says it wants to achieve. It must give teams the resources they need, agree achievable objectives or goals with the team, and make sure they have the skills to do the job well.
Organisations need to set more specific goals for themselves than just their mission statement. These set the immediate direction of the organisation, and help them measure their performance. These goals can be at different levels of detail:

- **Strategic objectives** are broad and are set for at least a year ahead, and can be for up to a decade or more in some industries.
- **Operational objectives** (or targets) are quite specific and are usually set for periods of a year or less.
- **Team targets** are set for teams for short-term periods, such as weekly, monthly or quarterly targets.

## Case Study

Tim is a team leader with TRS, a company which provides technical servicing and repair services to companies. Teams like Tim’s repair and service electrical equipment used in manufacturing and distribution companies all over the country.

Tim’s team covers the East Midlands, but it also supports teams in neighbouring areas if they are unable to cope with peaks in their workload. TRS prides itself on being able to respond quickly to customer calls, especially to emergencies. This is because problems with machinery and equipment may make it difficult for customers to operate and that can affect their business severely.

TRS advertise themselves as being ‘like your own in-house repair team’ and encourage their team members to get to know about their customers’ businesses so that they can be more effective in the service they give. The TRS mission statement is very simple but clear about what they are aiming to achieve:

‘The TRS goal is to help industry succeed’

The company argues that a successful industry means more business for TRS. If Tim and his team focus on helping their customers to succeed then TRS will succeed as well.
Working to achieve team goals

As the goals move from the mission statement to the level of individual teams they become more specific, more detailed and more measurable. If every team hits its targets, then the operational objectives can be met, which in turn means that the strategic objectives are met, and the mission is fulfilled.

Case Study

**Vapour Technologies** (mission: ‘To be world leaders in vapour technology’) has set itself the strategic objective of developing new overseas markets during the next five year period.

To convert this into a practical goal, the company sets an operational objective of increasing its revenue from overseas sales by 25% in the coming year.

To make this objective even more specific, the overseas sales team has monthly sales targets based on the company’s overseas sales objective.

**Halborough City Council** (mission: ‘to create a better life for the people of Halborough’) has set a strategic target of reducing traffic congestion in the city centre. The city council’s transport department sets the operational objective of having two new ‘park and ride’ schemes in operation by the end of next year, to reduce the traffic coming into the city centres by 750 cars per day.

The team preparing a park and ride site has the target of levelling the site by the end of July ready for landscaping and asphalting the parking area.

You can see how these goals relate to each other:

- **The mission statement** sets the broad direction for the organisation.
- **Strategic objectives** set the general goals for the organisation for the next few years, putting the mission into practice.
- **Operational objectives** set measurable goals for the organisation for the next year, as stages in achieving the strategic objectives.
- **Team targets** set specific, measurable goals for teams to achieve which are necessary steps towards achieving the operational objectives.
In reality, of course, not all team targets are hit. Operational targets are sometimes missed as a result, and organisations fail to hit their strategic objectives. The better your team does in meeting its targets, the more the whole organisation is able to achieve its long term goals and fulfil its mission.

**Exercise**

What targets does your team have to achieve (if any)?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

What operational objectives are they designed to achieve (if you know them)?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

**Case Study**

TRS has had a very successful year in attracting new customers, but they are worried about losing some of their old ones if they overstretch themselves.

They have set a strategic goal of increasing their turnover by 25% in the next three years, as well as achieving some efficiency and profitability improvements. The technical service teams have got to be able to handle a 7% increase in customers this year, but without any increase in staff.

They expect to do this by making some changes to the geographical areas and by better scheduling of visits. They will be using some new computer software to schedule visits and this should cut down travel time. They will also have better equipped vehicles, with more components on board, to cut down on repeat visits.

Tim’s team have set the target of reducing their monthly mileage to 1,500 (from about 1,700) and the number of repeat calls from six per week to five per week.
What makes a good target? There are five things you should look for in setting targets:

1. Targets should be **specific**. \( S \)
2. Targets have to be **measurable**. \( M \)
3. Targets should be **achievable** (or **agreed**). \( A \)
4. Targets should be **resourced** or (**realistic**). \( R \)
5. Targets should be **time-based** (or **timely**). \( T \)

These are known as **SMART** targets. They should be clear and detailed, so that everyone knows what you are trying to do. For example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target</th>
<th>SMART</th>
<th>Is it SMART?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘Using the updated software, the team set a target of at least ten orders each per day.’</td>
<td>Specific</td>
<td>...at least ten orders...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Measurable</td>
<td>...ten orders...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Achievable</td>
<td>...the team set...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Resourced</td>
<td>Using the updated software...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Time-bound</td>
<td>...per day...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With this target, team members will have a clear idea of what they are aiming to achieve. The target is designed so that their organisation hits its sales objective. This will only be achieved if the team maintains its current level of orders.

It’s not enough to set targets, you have to hit them as well. And that means you have to know if you’ve hit them. That’s what being measurable means. Measurable targets are targets which you will know if you’ve hit them or not.
Exercise

Which of these targets do you think are measurable? Circle the number of the ones you choose.

1. Improve customer satisfaction.
2. Complete one week’s production with no rejects.
3. Service 35 vehicles per week.
4. Recruit only well motivated staff.
5. Answer all call outs promptly.

Although improving customer service, answering all call outs promptly and recruiting well motivated staff are worthwhile aims, they are very difficult to measure. This makes them poor as targets. If the organisation has a system for measuring customer service regularly, the tiniest increase would count as an improvement. ‘Promptly’ can mean different things to different people, as can ‘well motivated’. You would never know if you hit the targets. On the other hand, ‘having no rejects’ and ‘servicing 35 vehicles’ are both measurable.

Agreeing targets, with your manager is obviously important. But even more important is to agree them with your team. If they have to achieve the targets, they should think them achievable and worthwhile. That way, they will be motivated to achieve them.

Case Study

Tim’s team decided on their two targets after discussing how their new area and new vehicles might help them improve their performance. They were less convinced by the new scheduling software. They wanted to see it in action first.

They felt that reducing their combined mileage by 200 miles was possible, because they had lost some of their customers at the far end of their area. They also felt that the extra parts and equipment would be very helpful. They didn’t like leaving a job before it was finished, to get parts. Now they felt that they had what they needed for most of their emergency visits.

Agreeing targets is easier if they are realistic. On the other hand, they shouldn’t be too easy, either. The best targets are those that stretch people, but not to breaking point. They take people just a little further than they have gone before. But not further than they believe they can go.
A sports team near the end of a match can suddenly find the reserves of energy needed to score the winning points. In the same way, a work team close to achieving its targets can often find the reserves of energy and skill to achieve targets which they are close to meeting.

Targets can motivate people, but only if they are seen as being achievable. When Roger Bannister broke the four minute mile in 1954, many runners before him had tried and failed. Soon after he did it, several other people also broke the four minute mile. They now had the belief that it was possible.

If your team members work well together and have the right skills, then stretch targets will focus these strengths. The team will be able to perform well and work to achieve its goals.

Your task, as team leader, is to ensure that the targets that are set have this effect. Use targets to motivate not to control or to punish people. Like Roger Bannister, your team must want to achieve their targets. By keeping your targets SMART this is more likely to happen. And if you achieve your targets, your organisation may be able to achieve its operational and strategic objectives. And that way, it will fulfil its mission.
Comprehension Check

Complete the following exercises. Refer back to the session if necessary.

A. A mission statement will usually include three elements:
   1. ____________________________
   2. ____________________________
   3. ____________________________

B. Objectives and targets are often set at three different levels:
   1. ____________________________
   2. ____________________________
   3. ____________________________

C. The best targets are:
   ________ , ________ , ________ , ________
   and ________ .

D. Complete each sentence. Circle the letter in front of the answer.
   1. A successful team will contain:
      a. very highly skilled people.
      b. people who are all the same height.
      c. people with the right mix of skills.

   2. A successful team also needs people who:
      a. like to succeed on their own.
      b. are motivated to make the team work well.
      c. like chatting to other people.

   3. Targets will motivate people if:
      a. they are set higher than anybody else has achieved so far.
      b. they are kept secret and then revealed when the team hits them.
      c. they believe that they are achievable even if they have to stretch to reach them.
Answer the questions following the case.

Penny has just been appointed as manager of a new unit set up by Abbey Farms to supply organic yoghurt to supermarkets and other retailers. Abbey Farms is a medium sized food processor which has seen how the market for organic foods is growing, and has decided that they need to enter this market.

Penny calls her team leaders together to talk about the strategic objectives they have been set. They have two years to become profitable and in three years time they must have at least 15% of the market for organic yoghurts.

For the coming year the team has three operational objectives:
- to get chosen by a national supermarket chain to supply organic yoghurt, under the Abbey Fields brand name;
- to supply at least 5% of the total organic yoghurt market;
- to achieve sales of £1.5m.

Fran leads the team which buys the fruit to be used in the yoghurts. She goes back to her team and discusses the objectives. They agree that they need to set themselves some targets to enable them to contribute to these objectives. They suggest that their targets should include:
- Identify at least 10 new suppliers of organic fruit in the next three months to enable them to maintain supply (they currently have 25 suppliers).
- Prepare to double the storage capacity of frozen fruit by the end of the summer (it’s now February)

1. Do these team targets seem SMART?
2. Are they likely to contribute towards achieving the Unit’s objectives? (Explain your answers.)
Think and Apply

How well do you use the skills in this session?

- Do you know your organisation’s mission and objectives? Are they widely known and understood in the organisation? Can you make your team more aware of them, if necessary?
- Do you set or agree targets which stretch your team yet are achievable? Are these in line with the organisation’s operational objectives? Is there anything you need to do to encourage the team to aim towards these targets?

1. Read the list of skills. Tick the boxes to show your strengths and weaknesses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>strengths &lt;-&gt; weaknesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I'm good at this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aware of the organisation’s mission and what it means</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>agreeing team targets to help achieve operational objectives</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>using targets to motivate the team to stretch their performance</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Do you want to improve any of these skills?

3. How do you plan to improve the skills you listed in question 2?
   (You might want to discuss this with your line manager or your tutor/mentor/coach.)