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Quickly, simply define firm's goals

In Step One, old mission statement replaced with 'MegaMission'

Sacramento Business Journal - by [Nick Montoya and Roger S. Peterson](#)

In the last column, we highlighted how projects get stuck. We introduced you to the three re-orienting principles behind the Magic Megaphone 60-minute project management process: Simple is Better, 85 percent is OK and Think Wow!

Our columns will now walk you through the five steps of The Magic Megaphone.

Step One is critically important. We have found projects in small businesses often falter because owners haven't defined the goals and mission of the business itself. That's like a house designed without a floor plan. There's a room here and a room there, but somehow they just don't fit together. It's the same with unconnected projects.

In our book, we describe how two small businesses -- a dance studio and a dental practice -- each started with a very basic project: Re-orienting and revitalizing their businesses.

Step One: The MegaMission

The MegaMission replaces the mission statement.

Leadene mission statements can get small-business projects really stuck. Project teams spend mind-numbing hours composing elaborate paragraphs that will rarely be read again.

Most mission statements are weighed down by bloated sentences that are difficult to remember. If you can't remember a mission statement, it wasn't worth the time it took to craft it.

The MegaMission is a simpler, easier alternative. It replaces silly buzzwords with efficient work words. It asks the small-business owner a simple question: Why are you in business?

The MegaMission concept is flexible. It can be a general goal, a precise objective or a simple statement of purpose.

Your MegaMission should be short and direct. Limit your MegaMission to one sentence or even just a short phrase.

A MegaMission should be the obvious reason for the project's existence. What is this project really about? What is our team or task force here to do? If your project team has not asked these basic questions, no endless mission statement will ever get your project unstuck.

A clear MegaMission is critical. Consider how many times you've participated in projects that went off course. A likely culprit: assumption. Too often we start a project assuming it is obvious what the project is all about. Then later you hear colleagues or managers outside the project team say, "Gee, this is not what I thought this project was all about. I thought we were focused on X, not Y." In reality, the project or problem statement was not clear from the start.

A MegaMission does not need 100 percent completeness. Instead, give yourself permission to capture only 85 percent of the project's obvious purpose. The remaining 15 percent of details and phrases will merely delay getting your team out the door and into action.

Our dentist friend often wondered if he should have a mission statement. He spent \$40,000 on consultants who devised elaborate solutions. But after only a few minutes using the Magic Megaphone, his MegaMission was obvious: Grow the dental practice. Isn't that a clearer road map for all subsequent projects in his practice?

Our dance studio owners tried to balance their passion to teach dancing with their need to run a business. After years of frustration, they spent just a few minutes to develop a MegaMission that made it all so clear: Become the top Latin dance studio in town. Every project after that became connected to a clear, understandable plan.

Of course, it's your project and your choice. You, too, can hire consultants. Or you can choose a process that is quick, easy and moves your team into action after one hour.

In our last article, we suggested you choose a current or future project to use for the Magic Megaphone process. Go to magicmegaphone.com and download the five-column Magic Megaphone template. Write the name of your project at the top of the template. You should now be ready to write a MegaMission that is simple, identifies 85 percent of the essence of your project and is easy to remember. If it's more than one sentence, redo it; otherwise, jot it down in the far left column.

You've applied all three of the Magic Megaphone principles to Step One, and you did so in minutes. Does that beat five hours locked in a conference room?

That's it for Step One of the Magic Megaphone. Step Two, our next article, will help you identify the benefits your MegaMission will deliver. Most project teams never do that, which makes it a tad difficult to recognize such benefits if you're lucky enough to see them at all.

Nick Montoya and Roger S. Peterson are co-authors of "The Magic Megaphone: How to Get Your Projects Unstuck and Back on Track in Under 60 Minutes." For more information, visit magicmegaphone.com.