

Creating a Shared Vision

A vision is a picture of the future. It is an image of what kind of community you are working to create and/or maintain.

A vision must:

- ✓ Be motivating
- ✓ Be easily understood
- ✓ Be positive
- ✓ Move people to action
- ✓ Include cooperative values and principles

Working together to create a future for the cooperative is a great responsibility. Members of the community who are working to create a place that folks are proud to call home need a clear and shared vision to ensure that they are successful. It shows members what they are working towards. While each person in the community may have his or her own personal goals and vision for the cooperative, the members must come to some consensus on a shared vision, and build their work around achieving shared goals.

Why is it necessary for the community to have a shared vision?

It helps us keep our eye on the goal

It can be a lot of work to manage a co-op. This helps us think beyond the daily struggles, issues, and problems. It helps us stay focused on where we are going and what we envision for our future.

It helps us to develop both short- and long-range plans

A shared vision gives us a goal and provides a roadmap for action planning. It sets the tone for how we manage the community according to our values, and helps us prioritize our goals and plans.

It motivates and inspires us

Many people in this country do not see a vision for themselves or their children. If we have no vision, it is difficult to sustain ourselves and motivate others. A clear and positive picture of the future will motivate members and keep the board of directors focused.

It connects us with each other

A shared vision helps us remember we are all living in the same community. It can hold the co-op together through tough times and reminds us that what holds us together is more important than what separates us.



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It connects us with the broader community

Cooperatives need a broad sense of vision that allows them to see their place in an historic, state, national, and world context. If members of the community understand that they are part of a state, national and world-wide cooperative movement, it connects them to others who share their vision for cooperative living and resident-ownership and control.

Below is an example of a shared vision statement for a resident-owned community:

“We envision a resident-owned community where members willingly give their time and talent to ensure that the cooperative is financially strong and well managed, is controlled by a ‘one-member-household, one vote’ system, is a place that residents can be proud of, and is considered a model for other resident-owned communities throughout New Hampshire and beyond.”

SMART Goals

(Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-Based)

How does one set goals that go beyond wishful thinking and create a *roadmap to success*? Simply put, you write SMART Goals! ¹

Specific

Goals should be straightforward and emphasize what you want to happen.

Measurable

Choose a goal with measurable progress, so you can see the change occur. Ask yourself “How will I know if I have achieved my goal?”

Achievable

Goals that are too far from your reach may simply frustrate you and cause you to give up. This does not mean “easy.” Achievable, in this case, means “doable.” An achievable project may push the skills and knowledge of the people working on it, but it shouldn't break them. However, your goal should make you stretch a bit; this will give you a greater sense of accomplishment when you attain it!

Relevant

Simply put, there must be some logical connection between the issue and/or problem. It also means that there must be some real-life significance, bearing or importance to the community.

Time-Based

Set a timeframe for the goal – next week, in three months, by the end of the year. Putting an end date on your goal gives you a clear target to work toward; otherwise, there is no urgency to take action NOW!

Example of a NOT-SO-SMART Goal

We need more committees.

Example of a SMART Goal

The Board of Directors of Happy Go Lucky Cooperative will have four key committees (Finance, Membership, Social, and Operations) that are staffed and functioning, six months from today.

Remember, each goal you set may require many steps to achieve it!
This is where the **ACTION/WORK PLAN** comes into play.

¹ Adapted from *Smart Goal Setting*, found in a goal-setting guide by Arina Nikitina. Retrieved from the Web at <http://www.goal-setting-guide.com/smart-goals.html>.

Seven steps to a strong action/work plan

1. Identify the problem, issue or project

Identify clear goals about what needs to change/happen.

2. Set a SMART goal

Remember, a goal should be motivated towards changing the problem or completing the project.

3. Assess resources

Identify what resources you have and what resources you need (one way to do this is to think about SCHEMES)

4. Develop an action/work plan

Create a timeline and responsibility chart that outlines:

- What is the specific task to be completed?
- Who will ensure the task gets done?
- What is the deadline for completing the task?



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5. Identify clear success measures

How will we know if we succeeded?

6. Evaluate

Did the plan lead to the outcome that you hoped for?

7. CELEBRATE

You deserve it. Say “Thanks” and publically recognize the hard work of volunteers. This goes a long way towards motivating future member participation.

"SCHEMES" Resource Assessment for Action Planning

One way to identify what resources you have and what resources you need is to think about "SCHEMES": Space, Cash, Helpers, Equipment, Materials, Expertise, Systems

RESOURCE TYPE	RESOURCES WE HAVE	RESOURCES WE NEED
S pace		
C ash		
H elpers/people		
E quipment		
M aterials		
E xpertise		
S ystems		