

# Destination statement

## *Getting from here to where you want to go*

By Holly G. Green

When Roger Bannister was attempting to become the first athlete to break the four-minute mile, all the “experts” told him it was impossible.

Some even suggested he risked death by pushing his body beyond human limits.

Of course, we now know that not only did Bannister not die, but the week after he broke the barrier, another

runner followed in his footsteps, followed shortly thereafter by several more.

Clearly, the sub-four minute mile wasn't impossible; someone just had to envision doing it.

When asked how he accomplished the feat, Bannister replied, “Physiologically impossible or not, I just saw myself doing it.”

To this day, many Olympic athletes use this

type of success visioning to achieve their goals.

The difference in skill levels at premier levels is often not discernible. What differs is the mindset, the clarity of vision on what winning looks like.

Leaders and managers don't often employ this approach in strategic planning, or even in simple delegation today.

Most are running so fast, they don't take the time to get clear on winning; they just run and hope they are

on the right track, running the right race.

But organizations are now beginning to understand what world-class athletes have long known – if you can picture the destination and get clear on what winning looks like, your chances of getting there dramatically increase.

### **Painting the picture**

One tool for painting a vivid picture of where you or your organization needs to go is destination modeling.

Designed to create powerful visions in the mind of colleagues or employees, destination statements provide cohesion, direction and behavioral guidance. They tell people what you are doing, what you are not doing, and what you will be doing when you get to where you want to go.

Some companies develop one over-arching destination statement for the entire company.

I find it more useful to develop a number of statements, or destination points, for each critical area of the organization. In fact, I often use these statements as a starting point when working with clients.

Examples of destination statement categories include:

- Key operating achievements (the big three or four).
- How the workplace culture will be, including





you work from the end state backwards, the likelihood of you getting there increases exponentially.

### Getting clear on the language

As you go through the process of creating your destination points, keep in mind that clarity of language is essential for ensuring that people are looking at the same picture.

People often use the same words to describe very different things, and if you're not careful you can end up with many different pictures rather than one unifying vision.

To get the best of what your people have to offer, your organization's future needs to be more compelling than the past.

Picturing your destination and describing it in vivid language will make it easier and much more likely your people and your organization will achieve the goals and break the own four-minute mile.

Especially as businesses begin to recover and reset for a different (and hopefully better) economy, it is critical you are clear on where you are now going, why you will still win and what it looks like when you get there! **SP**

*Holly G. Green is author of More Than A Minute, and the CEO and Managing Director of The Human Factor, Inc. She has more than 20 years of executive level and operations experience in FORTUNE 100, entrepreneurial, and management consulting organizations. For more information, please visit her Web site: [morethanaminute.com](http://morethanaminute.com).*

In today's fast-paced world, three years makes more sense. Recently, all of my clients are doing one-year destination modeling and plans.

The rate of change today is so great that anything beyond that and you are likely just wildly guessing as to what is possible.

### Validating your destination

Once you have identified your destination points, measure each one against the following criteria:

- Consistency. Is it consistent with the mission statement (the why you exist)?
- Clarity. Is it easy to understand? Is it easy to tell what is in and what is out? Does it tell you what you need to do (directionally)?
- Specific. Does it provide enough details to initiate a level of measurement? Does it paint a picture employees can relate to and a place they can envision?
- Flexible. Is it flexible enough to include evolving business needs?
- Pride. Does it make you feel proud to be part of the effort?
- Inspiration. Does it compel you to want to go there?

Once you have clarity on your destination points, repeat the process (using the same categories) to define your current state.

This will identify any gaps that need to be addressed and enable you to plan appropriate action steps and time frames. Always start with the end state and then compare to current reality. When

attitudes, beliefs, values and operating principles.

- What skills, knowledge and abilities will exist in the organization? In each business unit?
- What organizational structures will be in place, company-wide and at each business unit?
- What work processes and metrics will be used?
- What tools, systems and technologies will be necessary, both internally and externally?
- What products will be in the market? What products will be in development?
- Who will our customers be? How many will we have?
- Who will our competitors be? What type of companies will we compete against?
- What will be our greatest competitive advantage? Our biggest threat?
- How will we be known?
- What will our brand represent?

Remember, your goal as a leader or manager is to paint as vivid and rich a 'picture' of success or winning as you possibly can.

To create destination points, draw a vertical line down the middle of a sheet of paper.

On the left side, put all the categories listed above and any others you come up with. On the right side, describe for each category what it will look like when you get to where you want to go.

A few short years or even months ago, companies frequently looked out five and even 10 years into the future.