VISION STATEMENT

The Vision Statement Tool aims to surface the goal(s) of your makerspace or maker activities as a learning environment or program. As a tool, it helps to scaffold the work of building a coherent message. It is important to note that a Vision Statement is a living document that will evolve over time.

1. Individually or with your team, take 5-10 minutes to address each prompt in the order that they are presented. Use the extra prompt text below to help generate ideas. Write down words, phrases or sentences that apply to each prompt.

2. Review your responses to each of the prompts, as a group.

3. Use your responses to each prompt to create a cohesive vision statement. This vision statement can be thought of as an “elevator pitch.” Therefore, restrict yourself to a statement that can be said in less than one minute.

4. Read (or have members of your team) read the vision statement aloud and make refinements.

5. Revisit the statement and the prompts from time to time as a way to evaluate its relevance for your work related to making.

PROMPT 1: WE BELIEVE What are your values? What is your philosophy?

This is the emotional core of your makerspace and what it addresses for your organization.

- Do you believe all children are creative or should be creative?
- Do you believe all adults can be entrepreneurs?
- Do you believe all members of your community should have access to high-tech tools and materials?

While you and your team might believe all of these (and maybe more), your most essential values for your makerspace and maker program will be surfaced here.

PROMPT 2: BASED ON What are our strengths? What are our areas of expertise?

There’s a reason why a makerspace or maker program makes sense in your institution. And, there are certain strengths and expertise that your institution has.

- Are you a leading provider of children’s programs in your community?
- Do your programs provide experiences that develop scientific thinking?
- Has your organization been at the cutting edge of technological learning experiences in your area?
- Do you and your team bring strengths that prove a makerspace is a natural evolution of what you provide for your community members or target audience?

PROMPT 3: WE AIM TO What are our goals? What do we want to accomplish?

Makerspaces and maker programs aim to achieve a wide variety of salient and reasonable goals. However, productive makerspaces and maker programs are clear about what they want to accomplish based on their strengths and their core values.

- Do you want to develop creativity in the children your program serves?
- Do you want to develop scientific inquiry skills in your program participants or their technological fluency?
• Do you want to target specific technical or craft skills for young adults that may translate to the workplace?
• Maybe you want to create a consistent place for teens to come after school so that they are not “on the streets.”

This prompt seeks to center on what impact your makerspace or maker program hopes to have.

**PROMPT 4: FOR WHOM** Who is the audience that our program or space serves? Who are the stakeholders?

This prompt provides a chance to specify whom the stakeholders are that the makerspace is targeting.

• Does the makerspace focus on a particular age group, or demographic group?
• Does your makerspace target a particular expertise level of amateurs or experts?
• Does your makerspace seek to work with a particular interest group like hobbyists, students, or teachers?

**PROMPT 5: BECAUSE WE KNOW** Why is this important? What have you observed?

You can think of this prompt as your “needs statement.” What problem or issue will your makerspace or maker program be solving or addressing. This prompt provides an opportunity to incorporate some data into your pitch.

• Is science learning important because currently only 10% of your community’s juniors perform competently on state standardized science tests?
• Are creative arts classes being cut from local schools and so youth need opportunities to engage in creative endeavors?
• Have you noticed many groups of teens hanging out near your organization with little to do?
• Have children told you they want to learn how to make clocks?

Although it might strengthen your story to use “hard” data to support your makerspace or maker program in the minds of some stakeholders, what you see and what your audience tells you also provides compelling warrant for what you are doing.

**PROMPT 6: WE WILL SUCCEED WHEN** What are our metrics for success? What are the indicators that our program is working?

How will you know that you are reaching the impact that you aim to have?

• While many programs traditionally use metrics like the number of people who attend a program as a measure of success, those metrics might not truly capture the quality of the learning experience that is being creating in a makerspace or through a maker program.
• Perhaps the number of participants served is appropriate if your goal is simply to offer a safe, alternative experience to what teens in your community currently might be doing.
• If the design process is important for your space, then evidence of iteration may be your marker of success.

Metrics for success are challenging, but useful for showing the change over time, as a makerspace or maker program becomes a reality.