

**CULTIVATE A
VISION
TO ACCOMPLISH
YOUR MISSION**

**amen
able**

MISSION

DRIFT

HAPPENS WHEN WE STOP FILTERING

OUR DECISIONS THROUGH

OUR STRATEGIC VISION.

As a church or nonprofit leader, it's easy to get caught in the weeds of day-to-day operations. If you're not careful, everything can start to feel like a crisis needing urgent attention. And after a while, even the good parts of your job crowd out the space you need as a leader to think and plan strategically. Sound familiar?

If you want to grow your nonprofit's impact, you're going to need to get out of the weeds and set a strong direction for them so everyone knows where you're going. This may sound intimidating, but it's actually much easier to move your mission forward when you make it a practice to cast vision for yourself and your team.

ARE YOU
CAUGHT
IN THE
WEEDS?

IMPLEMENT BUDGET. MANAGE VOLUNTEERS. PAY BILLS. POST ON SOCIAL MEDIA. FUNDRAISE. CREATE FLYERS. FOLLOW-UP ON DEADLINES. ORGANIZE. ENCOURAGE VOLUNTEERS. FOLLOW-UP WITH DONATIONS. UPDATE DATABASE. MANAGE DAILY OPERATIONS. WRITE NEWSLETTER. ORDER TONER AND PAPER. PLAN AWARENESS CAMPAIGN. LAY OUT BUSINESS CARD. WRITE NEWSLETTER. RECRUIT VOLUNTEER LEADER. TRACK LEAD GENERATION. IMPLEMENT BUDGET. MANAGE VOLUNTEERS. PAY BILLS. POST ON SOCIAL MEDIA. FUNDRAISE. CREATE FLYERS. FOLLOW-UP ON DEADLINES. ORGANIZE. ENCOURAGE VOLUNTEERS. FOLLOW-UP WITH DONATIONS. UPDATE DATABASE. MANAGE DAILY OPERATIONS. ORDER MORE TONER AND PAPER. LAY OUT BUSINESS CARD. WRITE NEWSLETTER. SEND EMAIL.

THINK OF VISION LIKE A GARDEN.

You could continue to pursue the urgent tasks in front of you without taking time to cast vision. And you can hope that your team will figure out how to reach their goals and further your mission. But a vision is actually the thing that keeps you focused and headed in the right direction. Without a vision, each team member can begin to do their own thing and quickly become sidetracked.

This is like if you plant some radishes, then your team member comes along behind and adds some peas in the middle, and finally your board throws some tomato seeds on top. Some of the plants will root, but most will stay weak because you can't tend them all well.

On the other hand, your harvest will be much greater if you put in some prep on the front end. A cohesive vision is like planting a row of seeds in a cultivated garden, where you've taken time to select the location and prepare the soil. You know what you're trying to grow and you've taken time to organize a plan. You're going to have much better chances at succeeding.

A COHESIVE VISION IS LIKE PLANTING A ROW OF SEEDS
IN A CULTIVATED GARDEN. CLEAR FOCUS, THOUGHTFUL PLANNING, AND INTENTIONAL
PREPARATION LEAD TO A GREAT HARVEST.



REMEMBER YOUR MISSION.

So how do you prepare the soil? It goes back to your mission.

Regardless of whether you're a church or nonprofit leader, you got into this work because you were passionate about a mission. It's the heart of your organization. One of the biggest mistakes we see churches and nonprofits make is forgetting about their mission. They know why they started their work, but spend very little time thinking about it as they go about their work days.

If you're not thinking about your mission, you can't accomplish it. Your mission is more than a catchy phrase to explain your work to your donors. Your mission should drive everything you do.

Francis Pandolfi put it this way in a [Harvard Business Review article](#), "An effective mission statement must be a clear description of where an organization is headed in the future that distinctly sets it apart from other entities and makes a compelling case for the need it fills."

ALWAYS
ALWAYS
ALWAYS
LEAD WITH
MISSION.

FILTER, FILTER, FILTER!

There are so many good things we can do in this world. There's a lot of opportunity. There are many needs. So how do you decide where to spend your time, resources, energy, and talent?

“Most of the nonprofits operating today make program decisions based on a mission rather than on a strategy. In fact, many nonprofits don't have a strategy at all,” said [V. Kasturi Rangan in a piece for Harvard Business Review](#). “They rally under the banner of a particular cause, be it “Fight homelessness” or “End hunger.” And then, since that cause is so worthwhile, nonprofits support any program that's related to it—even if only tangentially. While it's hard to fault people for trying to improve the state of the world, this approach is misguided. Acting without a clear long-term strategy can stretch an agency's core capabilities and push it in unintended directions.”

Approaching church or nonprofit work in this way that Rangan describes often leads to mission drift—a concept unpacked in the [book by the same name, by Chris Horst, Anna Haggard, and Peter Greer](#). As you begin to chase causes and programs, it's so easy to get away from your organization's real goals. It's a slow fade and one day you might wake up and realize you're working for a very different organization than the one you joined in the first place.

The way to avoid mission drift is by filtering your decisions through your strategic vision. Your vision should be the thing that helps decide where to focus. It keeps you from getting distracted by good things, so you can focus on what you do best.

A nice byproduct of filtering your efforts and initiatives through your vision is saving money. Because your vision tells you what to say yes to and what to say no to. It also illuminates what you're inviting donors and volunteers into. And, it allows the people you're serving to understand clearly what you're doing for them. The better you filter, the better you'll be able to care for your staff, volunteers, donors, and beneficiaries.



**QUALITY OVER QUANTITY ALWAYS,
BECAUSE QUALITY IS WHAT BRINGS LASTING CHANGE
IN PEOPLE'S LIVES.**

THE MYTH OF MORE

Let's bust this myth right now: more does not equal better. You do not need to have a lot of programs to be a great organization. In fact, you will probably have a far greater impact if you focus on doing less, but doing it better.

Quality over quantity always. Because quality is what brings lasting change in people's lives.

Are you sold? Now that you know why vision setting is important, take a few minutes to create some visionary space for yourself using the worksheet at the end of this resource. Then, post it up somewhere you'll see it often. It can be a visual reminder of where you're going.

Your mission is at the top: That's where you're headed. Everything you're doing needs to feed, build, and hold true to that mission. The next level details how you live the mission out practically or how you achieve the mission—programs and offerings. And the base of the pyramid is what you need to make that happen—funding, paid staff, supplies, more board members, infrastructure, and so on.

Feeling stuck? This is a great conversation to have with your board. If everyone on the board is stuck, go back to your mission and begin weeding out all the extras. Identify the one most important thing you need to do to live out your mission, and toss everything else out.

One of the reasons we love working with small and medium nonprofits is because their resources are limited, so they more naturally filter their efforts through their mission.

**SO, WHAT
VISION
ARE YOU CULTIVATING?**

Want to find out how Amenable can help you further your mission? We'd love to talk. [Take a look at some of our recent work with churches and nonprofits.](#) Then, reach out! We're here to answer your questions.

Email us at hello@weareamenable.com to start a conversation!

LET'S WORK ON YOUR VISION.

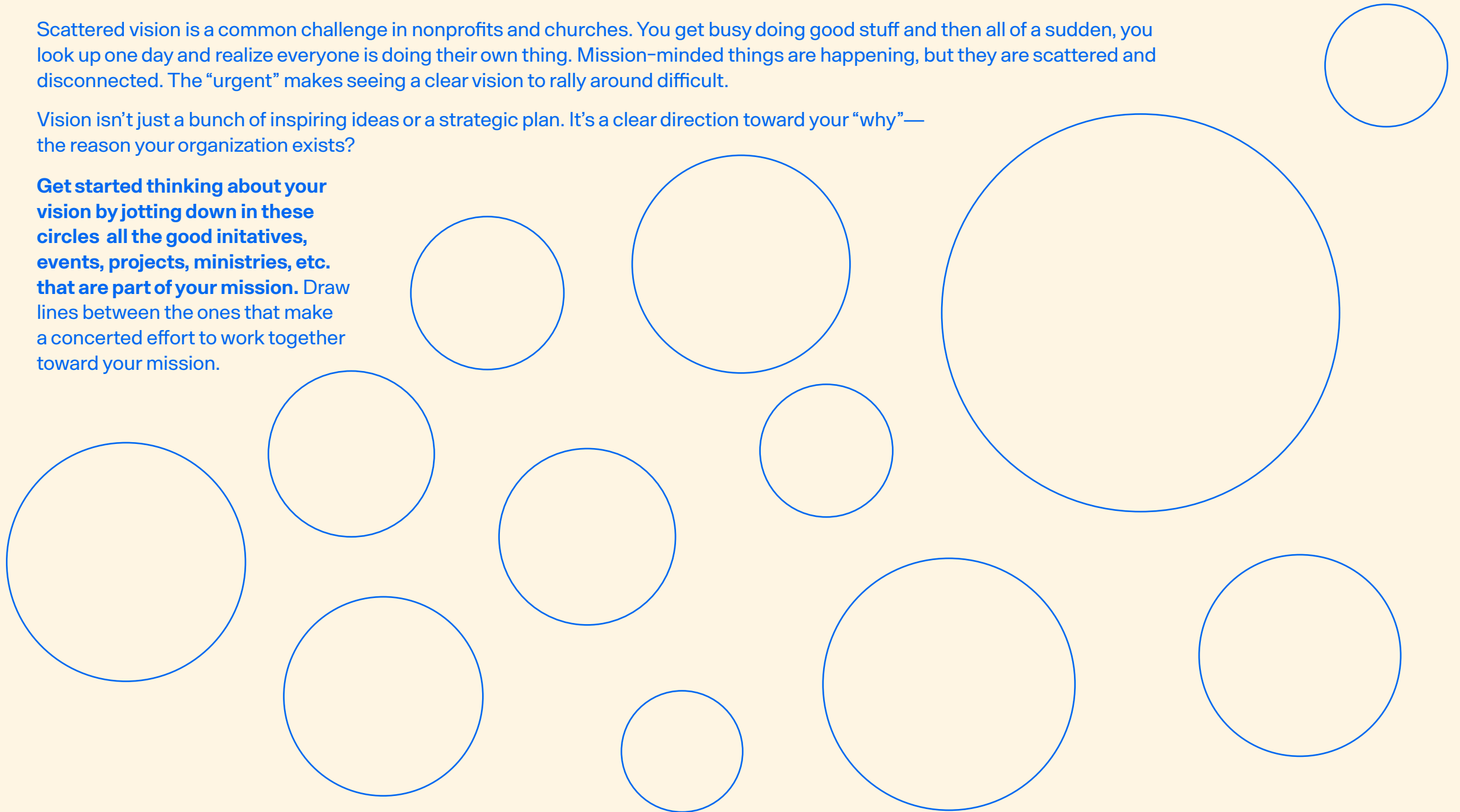
VISION WORKSHEET

HOW YOU APPROACH VISION NOW

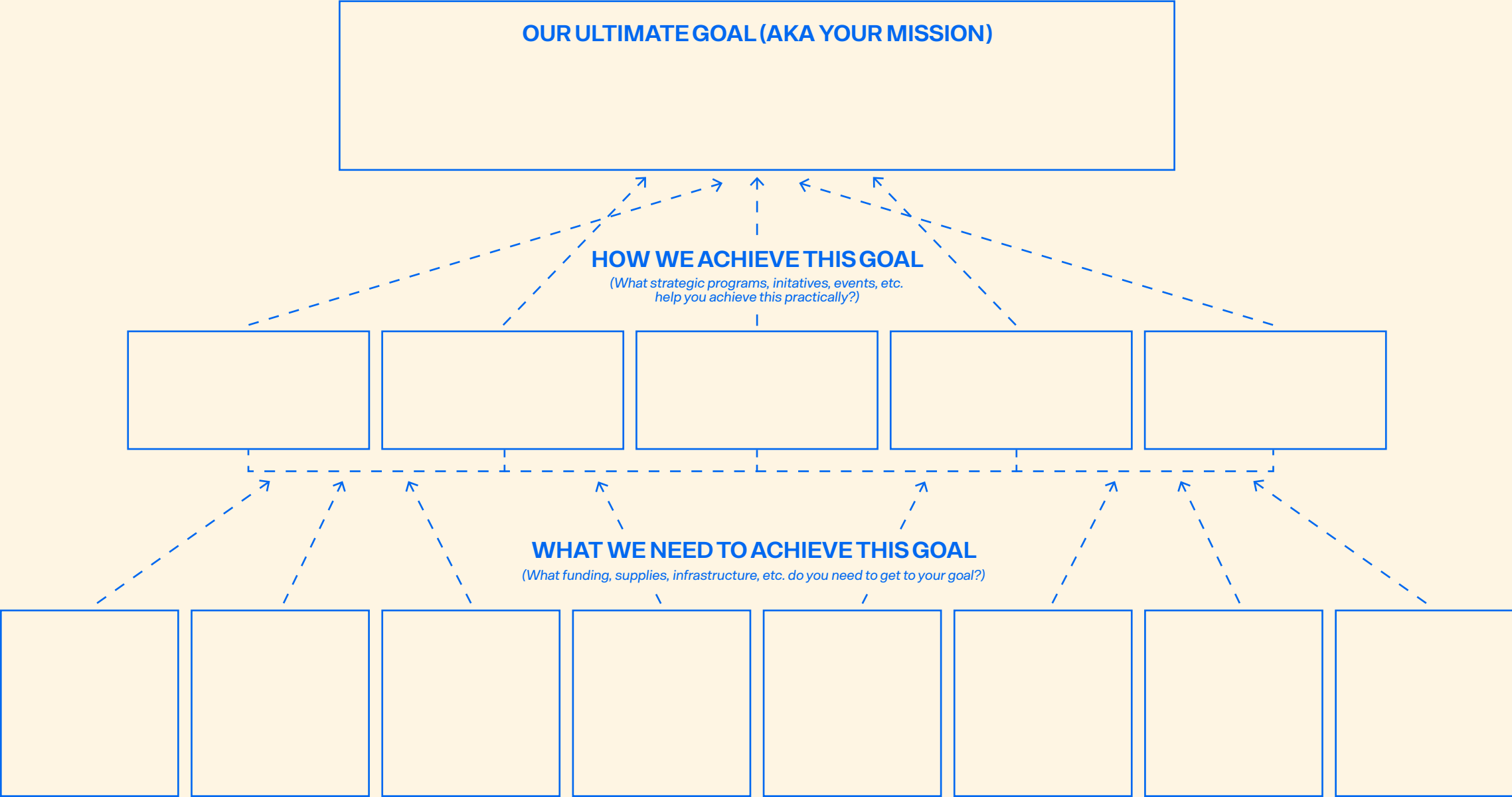
Scattered vision is a common challenge in nonprofits and churches. You get busy doing good stuff and then all of a sudden, you look up one day and realize everyone is doing their own thing. Mission-minded things are happening, but they are scattered and disconnected. The “urgent” makes seeing a clear vision to rally around difficult.

Vision isn't just a bunch of inspiring ideas or a strategic plan. It's a clear direction toward your “why”—the reason your organization exists?

Get started thinking about your vision by jotting down in these circles all the good initiatives, events, projects, ministries, etc. that are part of your mission. Draw lines between the ones that make a concerted effort to work together toward your mission.



HOW YOU SHOULD APPROACH VISION



READY FOR MORE?

Want to learn more about mission and vision setting? Here are some of our favorite resources.

- ▶ [Mission Drift: The Unspoken Crisis Facing Leaders, Charities, and Churches](#) by Peter Greer, Chris Horst, & Anna Haggard
- ▶ [Managing the Non-profit Organization: Principles and Practices](#) by Peter F. Drucker
- ▶ [Start with Why: How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone to Take Action](#) by Simon Sinek
- ▶ [The Five Most Important Questions You Will Ever Ask About Your Organization](#) by Peter F. Drucker
- ▶ [HBR's 10 Must Reads on Nonprofits and the Social Sectors](#) by Harvard Business Review

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**Now that you know a bit more
about what we can do, want to learn
more about what we could do for you?**

Email us at hello@weareamenable.com with any questions you have.
We'd love to hear from you and have a conversation!

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