Aims and objectives - NATS

NATS is a global air navigation provider. NATS manages the world's busiest section of airspace as well as the busiest single and dual runway airports in Europe and the Middle East. Its systems and people manage over 6,000 flights a day through UK airspace – over 2 million a year – safely and efficiently. As well as managing 15 of the UK's busiest airports, NATS projects currently include air traffic controller training and redesigning airspace in Hong Kong; providing start-up training for ATC and safety management in Slovakia; as well as providing and integrating all ATC equipment for the new control tower at Manchester airport.

Aims and vision - An organisation's vision describes where the business wants to be in an ideal world. A vision is aspirational and can be inspirational for employees and stakeholders. Aims describe what the business intends to do in the long term and help to deliver the vision. Examples of aims might be to increase profit or to improve the business' impact on the environment. NATS needs to be able to respond to economic pressures and meet efficiency and environmental targets. It also has to be able to meet the challenge of increasing numbers of competitors bidding for global contracts. NATS' vision is: *'to be acknowledged as a global leader in innovative air traffic solutions and airport performance'.* In order to achieve its vision, NATS has established several key aims:

• Continuous growth for the business, both organic and inorganic with a view to achieving and sustaining turnover of over £1bn by 2015.

• Reducing safety risks across the business – NATS handled 2.1 million flights in 2011. For the fourth year running, there were no incidents where the distance between aircraft under NATS air traffic control was compromised.

• Engaging with and focusing on its customers' needs – this includes implementing technical developments that will deliver fuel savings for airlines, improve efficiency and ensure continued punctuality and reduced operating costs for airports.

• Increasing efficiency and effectiveness of internal operations – for example, NATS efficiency in purchasing has been recognised with the award of the Gold certificate from CIPS (the Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply).

• Reducing carbon emissions – for example NATS made over 100 operational and procedural changes in air traffic flows. These have saved an estimated 115,000 tonnes of CO_2 emissions since 2009 – a fuel saving worth £22 million.

Objectives - Objectives set out the outcomes the business needs in order to achieve its aims and may relate to functions or the whole business. The use of SMART objectives helps a business to ensure that its progress towards achieving its objectives can be measured. Examples of SMART objectives set by NATS include:

• To reduce the level of safety risk across the business by 40% over a period of four years.

Specific – so that everyone knows exactly what is to be achieved

Measurable – sets out the level to be achieved

Agreed – relevant staff are involved in setting the objectives and are committed to keeping them

Relevant – to the organisation's overall purpose

Time-framed – to ensure that it will fit within the organisation's overall plans

• To reduce CO_2 emissions related to air traffic management by an average of 10% per flight by 2020, from a 2006 baseline. The interim target is to achieve an average of 4% per flight reduction by 2015.

Questions

1. What is an organisation's vision?

2. Describe business aims, giving examples from the case study.

3. Explain what is meant by a SMART objective, again giving examples from the study.

4. Analyse the importance for businesses of having aims and objectives.

Task

Scenario: You are considering setting up an art gallery in your local area which would focus mainly on showcasing and selling work from local artists. Write a vision, supporting aims and appropriate SMART objectives for the gallery. Explain why the vision, aims and objectives you have chosen would be appropriate for your business.

What have you learned?

60 second challenge - split into pairs and nominate one of the pair to go first. They must talk for 60 seconds, without stopping or hesitating, about what they have learned in the lesson. After 60 seconds is over, the second in the pair has to talk for 30 seconds without repeating something the first person had said.