

Muddy's Bake Shop 2022 Vision

WHAT IS A VISION?

It's a descriptive story that illustrates what "success" looks and feels like at a specific point in the future. It is not a plan for how to get there or a to-do list. It should describe the important bits while leaving room for flexibility. Another way to think of this is a story that describes what our mission & bottom lines look like if we are achieving them in ways we feel proud of.

WHEN WAS THIS ONE WRITTEN? AND BY WHOM?

I drafted it using the following "source material": staff input at all-hands in Jan 2020 (when we still had 3 locations and 40 staff), small group discussions with customers, suppliers, & community partners, an exercise with the team after re-opening assessing what we were most proud of and enjoy, and of course, some introspection personally on what I need & want from the business in order to fulfill my own vision of success.

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It's Christmas Eve of 2022 and Muddy's feels like Santa's workshop- busy, cheerful, and totally magic!

As you drive (or bike!) up Broad Ave you spot Muddy's easily. The outdoor space is inviting and parking is easy; green space is used creatively. A small seating area provides a welcoming entrance to our campus. Warm twinkle lights in the windows and the smell of gingerbread in the air fill you with a "welcome home" feeling. People are coming and going- picking up their preorders or stopping by the shop for some last minute shopping. Everyone walking out the door has a bag full of fresh-baked goodies that they're excited to share... and a big smile on their face. You spy the Muddy's treat truck heading back out with a fresh batch of lovin' from the oven to take on the road, spreading smiles across town!

Inside, Muddy's is a fabulous feast for the senses- tempting sights, smells, and of course, flavors everywhere! Our shop is neat & organized with fun surprises & a playful vibe. You easily find what you came for and discover unexpected new favorites. Abundant, creative displays showcase our delicious homemade goods as well as a curated selection of artisan foods & kitchen gifts. Guests can browse freely, taking their time to explore, while a friendly, knowledgeable gnomie is always available and eager to answer questions, offer a sample, and assist with an order. You see a customer purchasing a last-minute cake for Christmas and they're thrilled when we offer to inscribe it on the spot! Every gnomie passing through pauses to clear a table, straighten a display, and welcome our guests.

The seating area is a cozy, welcoming spot for folks to enjoy a hot drink & slice of pie. Funky upholstery, lamplight, and walls crowded with an eclectic mix of framed art, photographs, and nods to our history make this space the quirky living room of the bakery. Strangers quickly become friends, sharing a table and wishing each other "happy holidays". Customers enjoy watching the action in our kitchen while shopping. They can see that our products are made fresh, from scratch, and they feel like part of the magic. Throughout the day gnomies wheel racks & trays full of fresh baked goodness into the shop to restock, smiling and greeting folks along the way.

As you look around you see all sorts of people: young, old, all colors & backgrounds, all walks of life. Strangers greet each other with smiles. You wonder what brings such different people together? Everyone here appreciates flavorful, from scratch food and a fun environment! They come to enjoy the comfort of familiar treats and the thrill of surprise bakes. They love the atmosphere and feel part of something special. Muddy's is the first place you bring visiting friends- a warm welcome to Memphis. At Muddy's, you feel like the guest of honor at our party and every visit becomes a special occasion!

The heart of Muddy's is the kitchen and looking in, you can see things are really cookin'! It's our last open day of the year and we're working extra hard to finish baking delectable cookies, cakes, pies, and more for Christmas pre-orders and walk-in shoppers! Intoxicating smells fill the kitchen and waft into the shop beyond-- gingerbread! chocolate! toasted nuts! -- and more. We're definitely hustling and the work is fast-paced but very organized. Every gnomie is working with purpose – doing a lot while maintaining energy & accuracy. Everywhere you look, gnomies whisk, cream, chop, knead, scoop, and slather with skill and a smile. We wave at folks through the windows and show off our craftsmanship- a bit of kitchen theater to entertain & delight our customers!

As you head back out, you peer in the east windows and see people in our classroom taking a baking class. They are up to their elbows in flour & dough, laughing & smiling, as an instructor shares some tips. We love sharing our expertise with home bakers, building their confidence & creativity. Demos and hands-on workshops are popular for date nights, friend outings, team building, and individuals. They book up fast and there's often a wait list- especially for our Christmas cookie classes. So many people purchased class tickets as gifts that our January classes are already sold out! Our classroom easily doubles as an event space and you can book it for small gatherings like birthdays, anniversaries, baby showers, meetings, etc.

Not only can you learn our recipes for baking success, but our recipes for vocational success too! In our Work/Life classes we enthusiastically share our “secret ingredients”- the tools & tactics for how we work- with other values-driven small businesses, nonprofits, and individuals. Helping others in our community succeed is a great source of pride for our whole team and one of the most impactful ways we serve our wider community.

How we work is very intentional and sets us up to be able to share- and sustain- the excellent products and service we're so proud of. The Muddy's team is small and mighty. We are committed to remaining a single location business in the heart of Memphis; most gnomies see each other every day, so communication is strong and our mojo is marvelous! Everyone contributes hands-on to making our food and serving guests. We learn new things, build skills, and stay close to the heart & soul of the business— the food & the people! Every person on the team brings their unique gifts to the table. We're a team of very few managers, but we are all leaders. Most staff stay several years at least. Opportunities for growth are centered around mastery of skills; teaching classes, increasing effective work flows, creating or curating products. We don't hire often, but when we do, new gnomies are inspired by how we care for each other & our guests... and soon they are treating their family, friends, and neighbors with even more kindness.

We apply our values to every action large or small and measure growth in quality, not quantity. We are proud to be one location: a human scale, independent, neighborhood business. Everything we do is on purpose. Our work has a rhythm; times to work hard balanced with time to recharge. Time for urgency and pause. Time to learn and to teach. We focus on doing what we do very well, not on trying to do it all. We can't be everything to everyone and enthusiastically send referrals to competitors, matchmaking their areas of specialty to specific customer needs.

We stay laser focused on our mission and are rocking all three of our bottom lines:

Outstanding experiences are hospitable, inclusive, & fun for all stakeholders: customers, staff, suppliers, community partners, and neighbors. Our community service is embedded in our daily rhythms and we contribute to our community through all our actions. We transport our guests to another world- one of wonderful tastes, smells, and sounds; our theatrical approach keeps things fun & playful. A Muddy's experience feels like finding something you didn't know was lost- somehow better than real life. You feel special and appreciated when you're here and you can't wait to share the experience with others.

Outrageously delicious food abounds! Our menu is constantly evolving and you can count on a few “everyday” favorites mixed in with surprise bakes. Everything is from scratch, fresh, and full of flavor. Locally grown ingredients are frequent guest stars in our food and shelf space is dedicated to showcasing local makers & artisan kitchen items. We take pride in everything we make and only sell products we believe are top notch.

Healthy profits ensure that Muddy's is a sustainable business. Our customers value what we make & our service, allowing us to thrive, not merely survive. We carefully audit our goods & services to ensure that they're top quality and pull their weight financially. Our profits enable us to continue improving the business and share our success across the team and with others, keeping Muddy's a great place to shop, a rewarding place to work, and of lasting value to our community.

The Muddy's team, customers, & neighbors are proud of who we are! We are blessed with plenty to both enjoy & share. We are our customers' favorite destination for special occasions & homemade treats. They love attending events & workshops, love our family-friendly shop, love seeing bakers make their favorite goodies, love the fresh aromas, and love visiting our treat truck at community events. Most of all, they LOVE that Muddy's is a place where kindness is contagious, hospitality is legendary, and every bite is outrageously delicious. They love that Muddy's is truly one of a kind and they are proud to share it with others. Most of all, they love that with every bite, every smile, and every moment, they can tell that we care.

We've served our last guests of the year, sending them off with shopping bags brimming with goodies and warm wishes for a merry Christmas. We've baked the last bakes, washed the last dishes, and given the whole place a thorough cleaning. As we stand together for our last shift cool-down of the year, we savor the moment and smile! We enjoy a hearty stretch and call out our appreciations for each other, our customers, suppliers, neighbors, and ourselves. Heading home for the holiday break, each one of us is full of gratitude... and looking forward to sharing the Muddy's experience again next year!

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NOW IT'S YOUR TURN (FOR INCOMING TEAM MEMBERS)

We share the vision because it's important that every single person on the team have a clear picture of what we're trying to do. Imagine if half of us thought "success" meant franchising & mass producing... those people would be working so hard on projects & plans to help the business get there- and getting super frustrated with the other half who believe "success" here means small scale, quality, and companionship. It doesn't mean either outlook is objectively "right" for everyone, but it's important to know what is "right" for US.

Questions to reflect on & perhaps discuss with your manager:

- * What do you find most compelling in our vision for yourself as a member of the team?
- * What do you think our customers will find most compelling?
- * What isn't clear or you'd like more details about?
- * Is this in line with your own values? Is this something you can feel proud to work toward?
- * What can you personally do in your role to help make this vision a reality?