

SWOT Analysis – The Basics

SWOT – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats

Purpose: Analytical framework to help organizations and teams develop a full awareness of the forces influencing a strategy, action, or initiative.

Strengths – The strength of a program, goal, or function comes from *internal* factors. These are things which you have full control over.

Weaknesses – These are *internal* - things under your control - that hinder progress. They are areas you can look to improve on.

Opportunities – Opportunities are *external* factors. While you can't control them, you can take advantage of them.

Threats – Threats are *external* factors beyond your control that prevent you from success. If you can't avoid threats, you can look to minimize their effects.

SWOT Analysis – Template + Questions

<p>Strengths [internal factors]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are your strengths? • What do you do better than others? • What unique capabilities and resources do you possess? • Which of your assets is the strongest? • What do others perceive as your strengths? • Do you have experience in this task/mission before? • What makes you better able to delivery your task/mission than any other entity? 	<p>Weaknesses [internal factors]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are your weaknesses? • What do others do better than you? • What areas do you need improvement on? • What do others perceive as your weaknesses? • What are the things you need to avoid? • Where are you lacking in knowledge? Skill? • Do you have enough resources to achieve your mission?
<p>Opportunities [external factors]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What opportunities are available to you? • What trends or conditions may positively impact you? • What external changes will bring your opportunities? • What are the current ongoing trends? • Can you take advantage of what others are doing? • Can you provide the missing link for your ultimate customers? 	<p>Threats [external factors]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What trends or conditions may negatively impact you? • What impact do your weaknesses have on the threats to you? • What are the negative aspects in the current environment? • What are the obstacles you are facing in the current mission? • What regulations or other barriers might be obstacles? • Will political instability hurt you?

SWOT Analysis – Tips

Tips:

- Make sure you are clear on your goal/mission/initiative when asking SWOT questions.
- Doing this analysis isn't an end unto itself, the value is in the questions you ask and discussion that results.
- The tougher and more honest the questions you ask, the more informative your analysis will be.
- Identify the opportunities associated with each strength and weakness.
- Utilize real data as much as possible.
- Focus and prioritize the most important items.
- Derive strategies by focusing on using strengths and opportunities to overcome threats and weaknesses.