

SWOT ANALYSIS TEMPLATE

<p>Questions to ask...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What advantages do you have that others don't have (for example: skills, certifications, education, or connections)? • What do you do better than anyone else? • What personal resources can you access? • What do other people (and your boss, in particular) see as your strengths? • Which of your achievements are you most proud of? • What values do you believe in that others fail to exhibit? • Are you part of a network that no one else is involved in? If so, what connections do you have with influential people? 	<p>Strengths</p>	<p>Weaknesses</p>	<p>Questions to ask...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What tasks do you usually avoid because you don't feel confident doing them? • What will the people around you see as your weaknesses? • Are you completely confident in your education and skills training? If not, where are you weakest? • What are your negative work habits (for example: are you often late, are you disorganized, do you have a short temper, or are you poor at handling stress)? • Do you have personality traits that hold you back in your field? For instance, if you have to conduct meetings on a regular basis, a fear of public speaking would be a major weakness.
<p>Questions to ask...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What new technology can help you? Or can you get help from others or from people via the Internet? • Is your industry growing? If so, how can you take advantage of the current market? • Do you have a network of strategic contacts to help you, or offer good advice? • What trends (management or otherwise) do you see in your company, and how can you take advantage of them? • Are any of your competitors failing to do something important? If so, can you take advantage of their mistakes? • Is there a need in your company or industry that no one is filling? • Do your customers or vendors complain about something in your company? If so, could you create an opportunity by offering a solution? 	<p>Opportunities</p>	<p>Threats</p>	<p>Questions to ask...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What obstacles do you currently face at work? • Are any of your colleagues competing with you for projects or roles? • Is your job (or the demand for the things you do) changing? • Does changing technology threaten your position? • Could any of your weaknesses lead to threats?

Notes to Assist in Completing the SWOT Analysis

A SWOT analysis is a framework for analyzing your strengths and weaknesses as well as the opportunities and threats that you face. This helps you focus on your strengths, minimize your weaknesses, and take the greatest possible advantage of opportunities available to you.

Strengths

Strengths capture the positive aspects that add value or offer you a competitive advantage. Strengths describe your positive attributes, tangible and intangible. They are within your control. This is your opportunity to remind yourself of the value existing within you. What do you do well? What resources do you have? What advantages do you have over your competition?

Consider this from your own perspective, and from the point of view of the people around you. For example, if you are a great mathematician and the people around you are also great at maths, then this is not likely to be a strength in your current role – it may be a necessity.

Don't be modest or shy – be as objective as you can. If you have difficulty with this, write down a list of your personal characteristics. Some of these will hopefully be strengths.

Weaknesses

Weaknesses capture the negative aspects that detract from the value you offer, or place you at a competitive disadvantage. These are areas you need to enhance in order to compete with your best competitor. The more accurately you identify your weaknesses, the more valuable the SWOT will be for your assessment.

Again, consider this from a personal perspective and an external perspective. Do other people see weaknesses that you don't see? Do co-workers consistently outperform you in key areas? Be realistic – it's best to face any unpleasant truths as soon as possible. Which areas might you improve?

Opportunities

Opportunities assess the external attractive factors that represent the reason for you or your business to prosper. What opportunities exist from which you hope to benefit? These opportunities reflect the potential you can realize. Opportunities may be the result of market growth, lifestyle changes, resolution of problems associated with current situations, positive market perceptions about your business, or the ability to offer greater value that will create a demand for your services. If it is relevant, place time frames around the opportunities. Does it represent an ongoing opportunity, or is it a window of opportunity? How critical is your timing? Opportunities are external to your business. If you have identified "opportunities" that are internal to the organization and within your control, you will want to classify them as strengths.

You might find useful opportunities in the following:

- Networking events, educational classes or conferences.
- A colleague going on extended leave. Could you take on some of this person's projects to gain experience?
- A new role or project that forces you to learn new skills, like public speaking or international relations.
- A company expansion or acquisition. Do you have specific skills (like a second language) that could help with the process?

Also look at your strengths and ask yourself whether these open up any opportunities – and look at your weaknesses, and ask yourself whether you could open up opportunities by eliminating those weaknesses.

Threats

A threat is a challenge created by an unfavorable trend or development that may lead to deteriorating revenues or profits. Threats are factors beyond your control that could place you and/or your business at risk. These are also external – you have no control over them, but you may benefit by having contingency plans to address them if they should occur. Competition – existing or potential – is always a threat (remember colleagues may be seen as competition). Other threats may include intolerable price increases by suppliers, governmental regulation, economic downturns, devastating media or press coverage, a shift in consumer behavior that reduces your sales, or the introduction of a “leap-frog” technology that may make your products, equipment, or services obsolete.

Part of this list may be speculative in nature, and still add value to your SWOT analysis. It may be valuable to classify your threats according to their “seriousness” and “probability of occurrence.” The better you are at identifying potential threats, the more likely you can position yourself to proactively plan for and respond to them. You will be looking back at these threats when you consider your contingency plans.

The Implications

The internal strengths and weaknesses, compared to the external opportunities and threats, can offer additional insight into your condition and potential. How can you use your strengths to better take advantage of the opportunities ahead and minimize the harm that threats may introduce if they become a reality? How can weaknesses be minimized or eliminated? The true value of the SWOT analysis is in bringing this information together, to assess the most promising opportunities and the most crucial issues.

Performing this analysis will often provide key information – it can point out what needs to be done and put problems into perspective.