

## Personal SWOT Analysis - Guidelines

A SWOT analysis is a stock-taking method designed for businesses in the 1960s by Albert Humphrey, a Stanford University researcher. It is a very simple and yet powerful and useful tool that helps an organization or individual to quickly assess **Strengths**, **Weaknesses**, **Opportunities** and **Threats**. The more specific a SWOT analysis is, the better it is able to serve as a useful planning tool. For example, for a “strength,” rather than saying that you have ‘great communication skills’, it is better to be specific and quantify where possible (I am able to smile through and tolerate people, hold my tongue and give constructive feedback to others). As you go through this analysis, be sure to consider not only your own views, but try to draw on whatever feedback you may have received from friends, family members, teachers etc...

## How Do You Conduct A SWOT Analysis?

1. The process must necessarily begin with knowing what your **vision and mission** are. This captures where you want to go (vision), and how you want to get there (mission). Once you identify where you ultimately want to be as an individual, then it is easier to use that as a standard for measurement. You may use a SWOT for different purposes, and so make sure that as you start, you always have an objective – **why are you conducting the SWOT? State your purpose clearly.**
2. **Goal-Setting:** It's important to set SMART goals, which are:
  - a. **S**pecific
  - b. **M**easurable
  - c. **A**chievable/Attainable
  - d. **R**ealistic
  - e. **T**ime-bound
3. Going through the SWOT analysis means addressing each SWOT area by asking yourself questions and trying to answer them. These must be written down. *Strengths and Weaknesses* generally focus on the internal attributes of the individual and thus, you have more control over these factors. The *Opportunities and Threats* on the other hand, generally focus on the external context that the individual deals with, and thus, you have less control over these factors. The SWOT analysis is alternatively known in some circles as “Internal-External Analysis.”

<b>STRENGTHS</b> <i>What are you good at (your own assessment and what others have also told you)? What comes naturally to you? ... You do this well, and can leverage it...</i>  1. Internal and has to do with YOU 2. Within your control 3. Current reality/ status quo	<b>WEAKNESSES</b> <i>What don't you do well in? This is an area where you get negative feedback on – from your own assessment as well as others. It's an area that needs improvement...</i>  1. Internal and has to do with YOU 2. Within your control 3. Current reality, status quo
<b>OBJECTIVE/GOAL:</b>	
<b>OPPORTUNITIES</b> <i>What are the opportunities around you that you can take advantage of, to help you achieve your goals? Who/what do you have access to, which you can use to your advantage?</i>  1. External and has to do with OTHER factors outside of yourself 2. Outside of your control 3. Current, anticipated/future	<b>THREATS</b> <i>What are the obstacles in your way, which make it difficult for you to achieve your goals? If you could, you would wish these challenges away, but since you can't, you have to find ways to mitigate them...</i>  1. External and has to do with OTHER factors outside of yourself 2. Outside of your control 3. Current, anticipated/future

## **STRENGTHS**

- What do you do well, or do best?
- How do you contribute to the progress (vision) of your family or school, club etc?
- What do other people or stakeholders say? Consider the recognition you've received ...

## **WEAKNESSES**

- What are some of the things about you that you know you can improve, or want to improve?
- What some of the things you want to do, but are unable to do successfully?
- What do other people say? Consider complaints people have consistently made to you.

## **OPPORTUNITIES**

- Think of your goal/objective - what opportunities are available, which can help you achieve your goals?
- What new things can you learn to help you to achieve your goals?
- What partnerships can you form with others to help you achieve your goals?

## **THREATS**

- What are some of the things that prevent you from doing what you try to do or hope to do? These are situations you naturally do not, or cannot control.
- What are some specific obstacles/external factors you would have to overcome in the near or long term in order to achieve your goals?

### **How do you differentiate between a “weakness” and a “threat?”**

- A “weakness” tends to focus on internal challenges (something about YOU as a person), while “threats” deal with external, or general, challenges that you cannot control – e.g., economic climate.
- Also, a “weakness” refers usually to a current difficulty/challenge, while a “threat” commonly refers to what could be a potential challenge, though it may not currently be a challenge.

### **How do you use the information from a SWOT Analysis?**

A SWOT analysis is useless unless it is used to develop actual strategies or steps that will move you forward in achieving your personal goals.

Ideally, you must craft an Action Plan that addresses the points raised in the SWOT, in that you find ways to:

1. Capitalize on, and leverage your *strengths*;
2. Identify and take steps to improve your *weaknesses*;
3. Identify *opportunities* to move closer to the ‘ideal you’ that you want and strategize how to take advantage of these opportunities;
4. Identify [external] *threats* and proactively plan ahead on how to overcome those threats;
5. Lastly, design a measurement and accountability system that will help you to stay on track, revisit the SWOT periodically and assess how well you are doing in achieving your personal goals.